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*GOOD LIVING.*

BY LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

THREE hours along the rise of day  
I met the gipsies on their way.  
With reckoning glances, bold and sly,  
Yet with a half indifferent air,  
They eyed me as I passed them by ;  
And, stolid, I returned their stare,  
Loving them with a stony eye ;  
And, caught by that strange trick of look,  
Followed the track and crossed the brook  
Whose stepping-stones were once a bridge,  
Struck over field and climbed the ridge ;  
Then, by long miles of moorland led,  
Came on their camp-fire, not yet dead.  
Unfit to touch their raiment's hem,  
How all my heart went back to them !  
For, clear at once, returned to sight  
Urchin and grey-beard, maid and man ;  
And, looking back, I saw aright  
A virtuous, brave-footed clan,  
Where not a soul went halt or sad,  
While, careless of the goal, each lad  
A rambler at the hedge-row ran.

Oh, masters of the morning star,  
So early up, and gone so far !  
Day's prime is past, and noon's in sight,  
But not where you shall sleep to-night ;

Nor is the reckoning yet told  
Whether you then lie warm or cold.  
Little you care for cold and heat  
When all the world is at your feet ;  
And, for the rest—'tis almost one  
Whether folk welcome you, or shun !

Ah, give to me the sturdy soul  
Which ten commandments can't control !  
Which tracks, whatever man may say,  
Its old primæval right of way,  
Unpricked by conscience as by awe,  
Through prohibitions of the law,  
So to the whole world spreads a snare  
And takes pot-luck of stream and air ;  
With never a dull day nor a doubt,  
With fingers skilled to tickle trout,  
With tongue to ply the trapper's trade,  
And wits to cozen man and maid ;  
Which, proud, goes quit of foolish shame ;  
Loves freedom, but will all the same  
Risk liberty to play the game ;  
And, where walls hold and gates are barred,  
Does cheerfully its 'three months hard.'

Could I do likewise, then were I  
A liver clean and fit to die ;  
Robbing an orchard or a farm,  
I to my soul would take no harm ;  
Over unbroken breadths of sleep  
From sundown into dawn I'd leap,  
To find unfallen rounds of dew  
Making the morning fresh and new.

THE FOND ADVENTURE.<sup>1</sup>

BY MAURICE HEWLETT.

*Heaven is my witness, I have no taste for prefaces. A story is a story, or verbiage. Yet it is to be remembered by a writer that the public has its feelings no less than he; and if it have met with certain personages before, likes to be reminded of the occasion. Now the actors in the following few pages have all had a hearing, for they are the tellers of some 'New Canterbury Tales,' to which the public was pleased to listen not so long ago, little thinking that those speakers (as they jogged along the footpaths through Hants and Surrey and Kent) had hopes and passions and troubles of their own over and above those they pretended. They had though: theirs was no peaceful pilgrimage. It began with — and ended in —; but let the reader judge for himself.*

## I. HOW CAPTAIN BRAZENHEAD WON A RECRUIT.

PILGRIMAGE to Canterbury and Saint Thomas of Canterbury, in some a piety, in some a courteous act, for some salvation, for some a frolic, in other some might be the covering of statecraft, of policy, of deep design. So it was with Captain Salomon Brazenhead in the month of May and year of our Lord God fourteen hundred and fifty. With him, 'late of Burgundy, formerly of Milan'—a lean man of six feet two inches, of inordinate thirst, of two scars on his face, a notched forefinger, a majestic nose, of a long sword, two daggers and a stolen horse, of experience in divers kinds of villainy, yet of simple tastes—with this free routier, I allow, pilgrimage was certainly a cloak of dissembling, while none the less a congenial and (as he would have been the first to admit) wholesome exercise. If he had served too long in Italy not to love conspiracy, he had not been to Compostella and Jerusalem for nothing. Indeed, he had skirted in his time too close to the rocks of Death not to respect those who (for honourable reasons) had cast themselves upon them. Therefore he was by no means without devotion in seeking the Head of

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Thomas and the Golden Shrine, for all that he had business, and high business, on the road. Firstly, in this reign of King Henry the Sixth, he was a Duke of York's man, a White Rose man. Secondly, he was one of those who had sworn to have Jack Nape's head on a charger.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, he was bosom friend of another Jack, whom he hoped to meet in Kent; I mean Jack Mend-all, Jack Cade, Jack Mortimer—call him as you will—the promising young man who promised himself a kingdom and Englishmen a charter, who actually fought a battle on Blackheath, held London Bridge against the Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens, and hanged Lord Say upon one of his own trees. From this practical statesman our Captain had received a roving commission to be *Vox Clamantis*: he was to trumpet revolution along the Pilgrims' Way. This road was the most travelled in the realm; it led all men into Kent—Captain Cade's country; it could be safely used—with cockle-shells and staves enough it could screen an army. Pilgrim only by the way, therefore, was Captain Salomon Brazenhead, sometime of Milan, late of Burgundy, now Deputy-Constable of all England under Letters Patent of the Captain of Kent.

I have spoken of his leanness, of his inches, of his thirst. It must be added of him that he was plentifully forested with hair, which drooped like ivy from the pent of his brows, leaped fiercely up from his lip to meet the falling tide, gave him a forked beard, crept upwards from his chest to the light at his throat, had invaded his very ears, and made his nostrils good cover for dormice in the winter. I might sing of this, or of his eloquent eyes; I prefer a pæan on his nose. Captain Brazenhead had a nose—but an heroic nose, a trumpet, an ensign built on imperial lines; broad-rooted, full of gristle, ridged with sharp bone, abounding in callus, tapering exquisitely to a point, very flexible and quick. With this weapon of offence or defiance he could sneer you to a line of shame, with it comb his moustachios. When he was deferential it kissed his lip, combative it cocked his hat. It was a nose one could pat with some pretence; scratched, it was set on fire, you could see it smouldering in the dusk. Into the vexed debate, whether great noses are invariable with great men, I will not enter. Captain Brazenhead was great, and he had a great nose; let this instance go to swell the argument. This fine, tall, hairy man rode directly to Winchester from

<sup>1</sup> Jack Nape was Delapole, Duke of Suffolk, the best hated man of his day, and no worse served than he deserved.



Southampton, his port of debarkation, entered the city by the West Gate, and stabled his horse at the George, which was then the principal inn. This done, he sent the ostler for a gallon of beer, and in his absence inspected with great care all the animals tethered in the yard. It was his intention to make sure of a good one for the morrow, seeing that his own—if a spavined makeshift levied from an Eastleigh smithy can so be called—did not please him at all. He chose a handsome, round-barrelled roan, rising not more than seven, and did not trouble to change the furniture further than to add his pack to those already on the saddle. He was then quite ready to drink his liquor turn and turn about with the ostler and two Grey Friars whom he found in a sunny corner—for the Captain was a large-hearted man. He captivated whatever company he happened to be in; this was his weakness, and he knew it. So now, with scarcely a word said, he persuaded those two friars that they had not seen what they had watched with some interest a few minutes before: he convinced the ostler that the horse he now saw and admired was the very horse he had despised when it came stiffly into the yard. Admirable man! he set his steel bonnet at a rake over one eye, chewed a straw, and cocked his sword point to the angle of a wren's tail. These things nicely adjusted, his mind at ease, full of the adventurous sense of strange airs and hidden surprises waiting for him behind strange walls, he walked abroad into Chepe, intending to pay his devotions to the Shrine of Saint Swithin, that (by these means) a good ending might ensue a good beginning; for, as he had said more than once, honour is due to a dead gentleman from living gentlemen. 'If I go,' he would protest, 'into such an one's good town and bend not my knee in his audience-chamber, I shame my nobility by flouting his. So it is precisely when I visit a Cathedral city, whereover is set enshrined some ancient deceased man of God. That worthy wears a crown in Heaven which it becomes me to acknowledge whiles I am yet upon the earth. And so I do, by cock!'

With these and other like reflections he passed by the Pilgrims' Gate, where the meaner sort of worshippers—pitiful, broken knaves, ambush men, sheep-stealers, old battered soldiers, witches, torn wives and drabs—stand at the shining bars, their hands thrust in towards the Golden Feretory, and whine their petitions to the good saint's dust, and entered by the west door,

with much ceremony of bowing and dropping to the knee, and a very courtly sharing of his finger-load of holy water with a burgess's wife, who was quite as handsome as one of her condition had need to be. Within the church he paused to look about him, but not to admire the shrine, the fine painting, the gold work and lamp-work with which it abounded. He knew churches well enough: business was business, that of Master Mortimer crying business, that of Captain Brazenhead fisherman's business. Rather, he cast a shrewd eye at the haunters of the nave, passing over the women, the apprentices, all the friars. He saw three or four likely blades playing with a dice-box in a corner, and gained one of them by a lucky throw. He picked up a Breton pedlar at his prayers, also a shipman from Goole, who had been twice hanged for piracy and twice cut down alive—'Three's the number for you, lucky Tom,' he told him by way of encouragement. In the Chapel of the Sepulchre he found an old friend, Stephen Blackbush, of Aldermay Church, now in hiding for coin clipping, claimed him, insisted on having him, and got his way. All this was very well indeed, yet the Captain sighed for more. 'I have here so much mass,' he told himself, 'so much brawn; now Mortimer needs brain. This rascaille would as lieve be under the bed as in it any day, and not one of it worth a pinch of salt to the pudding we have in the pot. Give me a stripling of wit, kind Heaven, to outbalance all this dead meat.' Scanning the company as he turned over these reflections and framed these prayers, he came plump upon the very thing—came, saw, conquered, as you are to learn.

This was a slim, tall, gracefully made youth, very pretty, who in a pale oval face had a pair of hot, small, greenish eyes, a long nose, a little mouth like a rose-bud, and a sharp chin dimpled; who wore his brown hair smooth and cropped short, and had the shape and tender look of the God's self of love, as Praxiteles might have seen the boy. This young man, whose name was Percival Perceforest, was a scholar in his way, well versed in the books of Ovid, the *De Remedio* and other like works, knowing a great part of the *Romaunt de la Rose* by rote, and also the Songs of Horace. These he was accustomed to cite colloquially, as a priest his psalter; he would speak of the *Vitas hinnuleo*, the *Integer vite*, or the *Solvitur*, where the other would have his *In Exitu Israel* or *Notus in Judæa*. Not that he had not these also as pat upon the tongue: afterwards it came out

that, bred for the Church, he was actually in minor orders. Now, with all these advantages of person and training, it is a very strange thing that he should have been found by Captain Brazenhead leaning against a pillar of the nave, crying upon the cuff of his jacket. Yet it was so. Round about him stood unwholesome, too-ready sympathisers, women of the town, harpies, hard-favoured, straddling, bold-browed hussies, whose gain is our loss. A short-faced, plainish man stood there too, respectably dressed, who tried to cope, but failed to cope, with two things at one. To the women he was heard to say, 'Begone, shameless baggages, tempt not the afflicted;' which made them laugh and hit each other in their mirth. The weeper he urged with a 'God help thee, youth, and expound thy misfortunes to me if thou canst not!' But the name of God caused the young man to blubber the more. Captain Brazenhead took a shorter way. He smartly touched his man on the shoulder, calling him his bawcock, his nip and frizzle, his eye and his minion; at the women he flung up his hands with a rush, as one starts a greyhound. 'Off, wagtails!' he cried tremendously; and they slunk or swaggered away with very injurious but muttered expressions to the effect that they were not going to do for such an old piece what they actually were doing as they spoke. 'Now, good Master Burgess,' said the Captain to the respectable man (whom he had placed at once), 'and now, young Niobus,' to the lad, 'we will accommodate these waterworks, if it suit you. Follow me.' He laid a hacked finger to his nose, and scowled upon the couple with so much hopeful mystery, such commanding confidence, such an air of give-and-take-and-bed—d, that follow him they did; the merchant as one who says, 'Well, well, since your humour is so,' and the other with subdued sniffs. But the merchant, as having a solid foundation upon this earth, trampled stoutly, with a smack of the shoes upon the pavement, while Percival Perceforest went a-tiptoe. It is proper to add that this latter was dressed in a tight jerkin of green velvet rather soiled, frayed at the edges, wanting a button or two at the bosom; that he wore scarlet stockings, darned in places and not darned in other places; that his shoes were down at heel, the feather in his red cap broken-backed; that he looked rumpled but innocent, unfortunate rather than debauched, as if he had slept out for a night or two—which was precisely the fact.

The Captain, deep in the delights of mystery, conducted his initiates to the stone ledge which ran along the new chantry of

Bishop Wykeham. Here he sat down, and courteously invited the merchant to a place at his right hand. This being declined with a 'Sir, I thank you,'—'Two feet for ever!' said the Captain heartily, and nodded Percival Perceforest to the place at his left hand. Percival meekly took it. 'Pretty lamb!' said this fatherly Captain, and put a hand on his shoulder.

Undoubtedly Captain Brazenhead had a notable manner; endearment and command coincided in his tones; he seemed to be pursuing his own generous way when really he was hunting yours. He succeeded with Percival to the point of marvel.

'Name, my suckling?' he asks, and is answered, 'Percival Perceforest, sir.'

'Could not be better, indeed. Your age, Percival?'

'Of nineteen years, sir.' The Captain smacked his leg.

'I knew it; I was certain of it!' he cried with delight, then sobered in a moment to ask:

'Now have you, Percival, in all your nineteen years of travail in this old round, ever let so much water from your eyes as on this day?'

'No, no, indeed, sir. There has been no such occasion,' says Percival, and breaks out sobbing like a drawpipe. The Captain thumped him on the back. 'No more o' this. Back to your kennel, tears! Down, ramping waters, waste my cheeks no more! Madness of moons——' Percival thought it right to explain. He looked up with all the proper pride of grief in his hot eyes.

'Sir,' he said, 'I would have you understand, if you please, that I am the most wretched young man in all England.'

'Stuff!' says the merchant testily; 'windy talk!'

'By cock, not at all,' broke in the Captain, 'but sound and biting truth, as I can tell. I know something of wretchedness, let me assure you, Scrivener'—the merchant started—'ah, and of English wretchedness too, since I myself have seen the top of a handsome nobleman lying two yards away from his trunk, and his pious lady pondering which morsel she should first embrace—a pitiful sight, I hope. And in Lombardy, you must know, they sow the fields with men's head-pieces, and thereby breed dragons, as Cadman also did in the tillage about Thebes. Sir, sir, this lad is in an agony, if I have ever known agony. Now, I will lay a thousand marks to your ink-bottle that I can place a finger on the nut of his grief.' The Captain spoke so heatedly that Percival was minded to soothe him.

'It is too deep-seated, dear sir,' he said.

'I prick deep,' replied the Captain, and raised a finger. 'Now mark me, boy. You, in the first delicious flush of manly love, have been torn from your bosom's queen.'

'Oh, sir!' says Percival, gasping.

'And she is of high degree.'

'Oh, sir!'

'And she is here in this city of Winton—and you have tramped in her steps—and slept under hedges, and in the skirts of brakes—and seen her—and by her been seen—and yet you cannot get at her—hey?'

'Oh, sir!' cries Percival, showing the whites of his eyes, 'oh, sir, what magic do you use?' The Captain held out his hand for the other to kiss.

'My magic is the magic of that glowing old puddle of blood, my heart,' says this triumphant man. 'What difficulty had I? What does youth cry for? Why, youth again. But you tell me much more than such *a, b, c*. Your jacket' (he fingered the sleeve) 'was good Genoa velvet once; and is not green her livery? The sun hath printed the badge in your cap and defies your busy fingers; do you bear arms in your own right?' He snapped his fingers. 'You have played with your master's daughter, page-boy.' Percival hung his head.

The Captain reassured him. 'Oh, you have not gone too far. The velvet tells me another tale, my friend. The pile lies down along this line, and this line, and this line'—he drew his finger down Percival's back. 'I think your master's staff has been at work here, therefore it was no case for the hemp-collar. And he sent you packing, I see. The white dust of Hampshire cries from those shoes; and here, as I live by bread, is some Hampshire hay to tell me where your bed was made last night.' He pulled a long stalk from Percival's trunks and tasted it. 'Whitchurch hay?' he asked.

Percival replied, 'No, sir, Sombourn.'

'Ah,' says the Captain, 'I knew it was grown on the western side of the shire. My palate is out of order. Where does your master live, then?'

'At Bemerton, sir, in Wilts.'

'I know the place.' He considered it, gently rubbing his nose. 'Good pasture lands about Avon. My Lord Moleyns owns the fee; but yours was not his badge. Would it be—no? Never

old Touchett—Angry Touchett, as we called him in the old days.'

'Sir Simon Touchett is his name, sir,' says Percival. The Captain snapped his fingers and looked blandly at the merchant.

'Do I prick deep, Scrivener? Now then, to it once more. Angry Touchett hath a pretty daughter, hey?'

'He hath four,' says Percival. The merchant sniggered, and the Captain tapped his teeth, then jumped up with a snort, pulling Percival after him. 'Boy,' he cried, venturing his all on the main, 'you love the second daughter of Angry Touchett.'

He deserved to win. Percival opened his mouth, words failing him. The merchant said 'Tush!' and walked away; and Captain Brazenhead clasped the youth in his arms. You may be quite easy in your mind as to whether or no the whole story was poured out unreservedly.

True it was, according to his own tale, that Percival Perceforest, foot-page to Sir Simon Touchett, Knight, had loved his master's second daughter, Mistress Mawdley. Certain familiarities growing unawares, and growing dearer by use; certain innocent natural testimonies given and received; certain pledges scrupulously observed, were followed by certain unmistakable tokens. It was all very innocent and passably foolish—a boy-and-girl, kiss-in-the-dark, dream o' nights affair; but Angry Touchett had beaten his daughter and trounced his page. He had packed the girl off to her aunt, the Prioress of Ambresbury, and Percival to the devil, whom he conceived to be his natural father. Poor Percival, absurdly in earnest over his love-making, had skulked about the shaws and osier-brakes of Bemerton, trudged to Ambresbury over the downs, and learned the news there—all as much to the detriment of his spirits as of his trim adornment. The news being that the Prioress would take her niece on pilgrimage to Canterbury, Percival, too, felt the call of Saint Thomas: he followed, taking the hospitalities that offered on the road; he saw the entry of Mawdley into Winchester with the Ambresbury retinue; saw her lodged in the stately Abbey of Hyde beyond the North Gate. He had seen and been seen, and this mutual grief had been too many for him. He had opened the brimming sluices of his heart; he was tired, sick, longing, footsore, heartsore, desperate, young. Tears had done him good, but the Captain did him more.

When he had the whole story out, 'Now,' said this intrepid man, 'you and I, Percival, are in the fair way of a classic friendship, as I see very well. What! we have mingled tears'—this was true; 'confidences have passed'—they had, but all one way; 'we have looked each into the heart of the other! You shall be Patrocle to a new Achilles, Harmonium to Aristogeiton. Or let me stand for Theseus, Duke of Athens, you shall be that nobleman, whose name is on the tip of my tongue, who was followed by his loving attentions to the gates of Hell Town. Now, just as Achilles was kindled by the sparks beaten from the heart of Patrocle, whom he tenderly loved, so shall I most reasonably be by you, my Perceforest. If Theseus went to Hell after that other gentleman, I will go to Bemerton if needs be. But needs will not. Needs call otherwhere. What do you say to a likely manor in Kent, with the title of Lord of Parliament, cousin and councillor to a great king? You have a kingly name, for was not a Perceforest king of all England? Everybody knows it. You may carve out these rewards and have your little Mawdley under your arm all the while. Come. I see a part of the way, but I am plaguily a-thirst with all this tongue-work. Come, boy, let us drink. Leave the rest to me: counsel comes on the flood. But let us by no means omit our respects to the respectable Saint Swithin, lord of this place. Come, my gamebird, bend the knee with me.'

## II. WILES OF CAPTAIN BRAZENHEAD.

THEY bent the knee together, the man of blood and the weeper, then rose up and went out of the great church. As they journeyed, the Captain was good enough to expound his philosophy of saints and ladies, whom he classed together as amiable emollients of our frail age, as so much ointment necessary to us in early manhood, better, however, taken early, and always in moderation. Nearing the inn he became full of thought, and his face took on so portentous a cast of brooding melancholy that Percival dared not break in upon him. The Captain, as the result showed, had been thinking partly of beer, for he drank deeply and at once of this fount of solace, with both hands at the flagon. Percival sipped his beer delicately, without wetting more than the red of the lips; his little finger pointed to the sky as he lifted his jug. This was not lost upon the Captain, who said to



himself, 'It is easy to see that you are higher born than you suppose, my lambkin; so much the better for Jack.' But when he had again drunk copiously, thrown down the flagon for dogs to sniff at, and wrung out his beard, moustachios, and eyebrows, regardless of his birth he slapped his young friend on the thigh, saying, 'I have it, gamepoult, I have it.'

'What have you, sir?' asks Percival. The Captain replied, 'There is but one thing to have in the world, since you and I are one. I have your Mawdleyne like a bird in net.' He shut his two hands together to shape a cage; one of his thumbs was stuck up for the inmate. 'She is in there, I tell you,' he averred. 'Do you see her?'

'Yes, sir,' says Percival.

'You are a good lad,' replied the Captain; 'and I'll tell you this for certain-sure: you too shall be in there, billing on the same perch, in three shakes of a leg, if you follow me. Is this to your liking?' Percival seized his friend's hand.

'Oh, I will follow you to the world's end, dear sir!' he cried with fervour; and the Captain, 'You shall follow me no further than Kent at this present. Now listen, and answer me. This Prioress of Ambresbury, what favour hath she? Is she a big lady, or a little mincing, can-I-venture kind of lady? Is she of fine presence or mean? In a word, doth she favour your tun or your broomstick?'

'She is a fine woman, Sir,' replied Percival, 'with a most notable shape.'

'Aha!' says the Captain, 'I feel a Turk. Now then, what sort of a train hath she? Many or few?'

'Sir, she is accompanied, as her due is, by two stirrup boys, half a score men-at-arms, an esquire of the body, a seneschal, a confessor, and five tirewomen, to say nothing of Sister Guiscarda, who hath no teeth to speak of, or of Sister Petronilla, who loves me a little out of pity.' The Captain, musing, made a note of Sister Petronilla.

'Very sufficient indeed for an honourable gentlewoman,' he said, 'and very pleasing to God, I am sure. Now, if I twisted the neck of one of those stirrup-jacks, and put you into his place and breeches, who is the worse?' Percival glowed in his skin. 'No one would be the worse, Sir,' says he, 'save perchance the boy whose neck you should be pleased to wring; and, oh, Sir, many, many would be the better!'



'Let be then,' said the Captain; 'I will arrange it for you.' Percival sighed.

'How shall I thank you, my noble benefactor?' he said earnestly. The Captain put hands on his shoulders.

'You shall thank me by your deeds, my lad. I know a youth of parts when I see him—a pale face that knows the look of letters, a thin hand that can curl about a penholder. You are exactly what I need. Don't suppose that you are not to work for your bliss. Not at all. You shall do a pretty work in the world before you are a moon older. Now I am for the Abbey of Hyde. Have you any commands for me? A billet for the round eyes of Mawdley Touchett? A love-lock? Ah, you are shorn like a Burgundian, I see.'

'Sir,' says Percival, 'I will write if I may!'

'Write, write,' his friend urged him. 'I am glad you have the knack of that. Presently you shall be writing for the realm!'

Percival, using his knee for desk, wrote in the inn-yard:—

My pretty lamb, these words shall kiss thine eyes, letting thee know that I am near at hand, withal crying to be nearer. And so I shall be anon, as I am assured by the noblest friend ever young man had. Start not, colour not, be surprised at nothing thou shalt see or hear to-morrow. O my lovely love, my rose, my dear, kiss this paper where my heart is spilt.

From thy true love,

POOR PERCIVAL.

To my Sweet Mistress Mawdley Touchett, by a trusty hand.'

'Read it over to me, boy,' said Captain Brazenhead. This Percival did, with some confusion of face.

'By the bones of Saint Jezebel,' said his friend, 'that is the prettiest letter but three I have ever read of—ah, or caused to be written. Soon enough, that gate, you shall wriggle where that will go. Now help me out with my horse and stuff. I lodge at Hyde this night; and do you lie snug in the Strangers' Hall, my dear, and stay there till I send for you.'

### III. HOW CAPTAIN BRAZENHEAD WAS HIMSELF RECRUITED.

THE deeds of Captain Brazenhead from this point became swift and ruthless; they demand epic treatment wholly beyond my present means, and would be omitted, with a bare mention of the fact accomplished, were it not for one beautiful flaw in them,

very characteristic of the man, which (although he had no notion of it then) entirely spoiled his own real design, to Percival Perceforest's incalculable benefit. Let me, therefore, say that the Captain rode (upon his stolen horse) into the stables of the Abbot of Hyde, and told a lay-brother whom he found there that he was to be a guest for that night. Dismounted, he stalked into the stables to see the animals. There was a fat, cream-coloured Galician horse there, with a head-stall of red leather. He risked his all upon that.

'What!' he cried out, 'is my gossip the Lady of Ambresbury abroad? Is that possible?'

'Her ladyship is here for one night, indeed, sir,' says lay-brother Eupeptus. The Captain faced him, with terrible eyes.

'And does she know, thinkest thou, bare-poll, that her dear Cambases is herded with common sumpter-beasts? By my head, I will never believe it. Where are her people? Where are her two stirrup-boys, her half a score men-at-arms, her esquire of the body, her seneschal, her confessor, her five tirewomen, to say nothing of Sister Guiscarda, who has no teeth, or of Sister Petronilla, who loves me a little out of pity? Lord of battles, brother, answer me quick!'

'Sir,' replied the trembling brother, 'I believe they are in chapel at this hour; but the two lads are out in the meads, I am sure, birds'-nesting. I saw them go down this half-hour or more, and I'll swear to their present occupation (once they be there) by my lively hopes of Heaven.'

Captain Brazenhead, with a great air, strode out of the courtyard; but, instead of going into the Abbey, he turned through a wicket-gate into the Abbot's garden, skirted a yew hedge, found a hole in it, wormed himself through, crossed a kitchen plot, a herbary, a nuttury, climbed a wall by means of a fig tree, and dropped ten feet into the meads. Then he took his way over the growing grass towards the river, which he saw coiling between banks of bright green, like a blue snake enlarging under the sun. The evening was very fair, the sun behind the towers of Wolvesey, the rooks circling about the Nun's Walk, larks soared and sang, a soft wind played over the meadows. The Captain particularly delighted in the cowslips, which, springing everywhere about his feet, appealed to his tenderest feelings, and caused him to skip like a lamb unweaned, lest he should unhappily tread on any nodding crown of them. 'My fresh

beauties! My dairy-delights!' cried he, 'I would as soon trample my mother's grave as your wagging golden heads!' Prancing thus, full of the soft mood which opening adventure always brings to the truly adventurous, carolling and talking secrets to the flowers, he drew near the smooth-flowing, dimpled waters of Itchen, deep and dark just here. Right and left, up and down river he looked, first at the rising trout, next for bigger game. He clacked his tongue in his cheek at what he made out. 'I am in luck's way this happy evening,' he told himself: 'I have divided the enemy.' This was the case. To his left he saw a figure in dark clothes—or (to be exact) the lower half of a figure—busy in a clump of osiers; to his right another, very delicately pink in the declining sunlight, sitting on the bank of the river, naked arms clasping naked knees, chin atop. 'This is my game,' said the Captain to himself; 'I leave sedge-warblers to the other innocent. This one is a bather. He shall have a long swim, by my immortal part.'

Captain Brazenhead, on his belly, crept warily up a drain; and it had assuredly gone ill with the Prioress's stirrup-boy had his stalking enemy not happened upon some very early forget-me-nots growing upon the north bank of his covert. This is one of those star-directed chances which may change the fates of Empires. Seeing these flowers, 'Oh, patch of heaven's blue! Oh, eyes of the deep hiding-place of my God!' breathed the prone, delighted Captain Brazenhead. 'Oh, colour of sacred hope, what blissful fortune drew my sight to thine?' He picked two or three of the starry flowers and peered over the drain, as he did so, at the unconscious youth, who, with his knees clasped between his hands, still looked at the water. Said the Captain in his thought, 'My lad, these azure blossoms have saved thy virgin life. Thank the Maker of all flowers!' So said, he sprang suddenly upon him from behind, as a boy will throw himself upon a great fish in a shallow. The boy, smothered under fold upon fold of Captain, could neither move nor cry out: one great knee was over his mouth, another pressed the pit of his stomach, his toes were pricked by a fierce beard. The Captain at leisure reached over for his captive's shirt, and tore it into three long strips over his head. With one of these he securely bound the prisoner's ankles; turning him over, he next tied his hands behind his back. Lastly he wound up his mouth with three or four thicknesses of calico; then carried him off and laid him

snugly in the drain, which was very nearly dry. He did not forget to choose a place for him close to the patch of early forget-me-nots. 'There, my chicken,' he said kindly, 'your eyes shall be gladdened by the sight of the innocent saviours of your life. Look upon these little blue beauties, and thank God night and morning for one of the fairest sights His world can offer you.' So said, he picked up the discarded clothes and ran as fast as he could towards the Abbey.

He broke through gates and doors, raced down passages, crossed the Little Cloister, and jostled a way for himself between the crowd of servants at the lower end of the refectory. The monks were at supper under the direction of the Prior, who sat at the high table. The Lord Abbot, no doubt, was entertaining his guests in his parlour; was therefore more remote from approach. It would be necessary for the Captain to roar if he wished (as he did wish) to be heard in there; and yet his sense of fitness told him that he should not bewail outrageously so slight a misfortune as he had been able to procure. 'The noise I shall have to make,' he had said to himself, reasoning as he ran, 'if I am to penetrate the walls of the Abbot's parlour, would be extravagant for the death of a prelate. Tush! and I am to waste it upon a thin little boy not even drowned in truth. But how else can I do to serve my friend Perceforest?'

Even as he said the words, being within the doors of the refectory, he began a wail which might well wake the dead. Holding on high the limp testimony of his news, he poured the whole of his magnificent natural organ into gusts and volleys of woe towards the rafters. *Tuba mirum spargens sonum!* 'Oh, too much dole to be borne! Oh, misery of men! Hapless, hapless Narcissus! Hylas, early cut off! Out and alas! *mes très chers frères*, look upon these weeds!' It was as if the Seven Vials had been loosed, as if the Archangel were sounding the Last Trump, and all the unhappy dead voicing their despair. 'O lasso! O troppo, troppo dolore!' pursued the Captain, intoxicated with his fancy, and breaking easily into the Italian. The monks and their guests were all on foot, the servants ran about, the dogs came out from the tables and howled at the howling Captain; the Reverend Prior whipped his napkin from his neck (lest he should strangle) and swallowed a toast before the time. A picture of tragic woe, the Captain stood before him, exhibiting in one hand a pair of murrey breeches and jerkin of leather, in the

other a stout shoe, two worsted stockings, and what remained of a shirt.

'Look at these tokens, Reverend Father,' says the Captain, 'and shudder with me.'

'Who are you?' asks the Prior, blowing out his lips. The Captain was ready for that.

'I am Mallecho, the Sorrowful Sprite, the Dark Herald, Testadirame,' he announced in bodeful accents.

'And why under Heaven do you show me your old clothes?' the Prior asked him testily. The Captain with sobs enlarged upon the question. Would to God, he cried out, that they had been his! Alas! they had covered a younger, more blossoming body than his old skin could hold. The nymphs, he went on to say, had the beauteous owner of these weeds; Itchen's blue wave rolled over him, fishes explored his armpits, eels and other serpents wreathed his legs. 'This man,' said the Reverend Prior, 'is undoubtedly mad. Let the Almoner be sent for, the Infirmarer, and the Exorciser——' But at that moment a monk, running in from a door in the panel, knelt before the Prior, a messenger from the Lord Abbot to know what this monstrous commotion could be about.

It was wonderful to see the change in Captain Brazenhead. The usher of woe no more, there stood erect as keen a man of affairs as ever you saw in your life. 'Your pardon, my reverend brothers, I had taken this good father for your Lord Abbot. Conduct me, brother, to his Grace. Unless I gravely mistake, I have sad news for his most cherished guest.'

'Do you mean——?' the Prior began to ask.

Captain Brazenhead laid a finger to his mouth.

'I do mean——' he began to answer.

'Take him with you, Brother Harmonius,' said the Prior; so the Captain with his tokens was led away to the Abbot's parlour.

In this very stately apartment of black oak and silver sconces and a statue of the Blessed Virgin, he saw all that he wanted. The Lord Abbot was there, a shaggy-browed, portly man, enthroned. On his right hand sat the Prioress of Ambresbury, majestic, ox-eyed, slow-moving, with the remains of beauty carefully husbanded; next to her a yellow old nun with a few teeth; next to her again the undoubted Mawdley Touchett of Percival Perceforest's handling, a fine die-away girl, with a creamy skin, bountiful shape by no means concealed in a dress of white cloth,

and a pair of brimming brown eyes which, his experience told him, would go through a diaphragm quicker than a knife through butter. Upon her further side was another nun, of mild, repining countenance, whose head mostly inclined to one side, and who as she talked drew the breath inwards. This must be Sister Petronilla, who loved Percival a little. Other guests there were, of whom this history has nothing to report. Supper was over: the Abbot dallied with a sop in wine, the Prioress with a silver toothpick; Mawdley Touchett, who seemed in a melting mood, rather tumbled and very tired, played with her fingers in her lap. A couple of minstrels half-kneeled on the floor, and strummed their strings to deaf ears. Captain Brazenhead was a diversion, a healthy gale in a close garden; the singers stopped of their own accord in the middle of an heroic couplet about,

Sire Simone de Rochefort  
N'i porta pas banière a tort,

and Captain Brazenhead came lightly to the point.

'By your leave, my Lord Abbot,' he said, then turned nobly to the Prioress. 'Madame, I bring this sorrowful testimony of the too early demise of one of your servants. A young boy, Madame, whose privilege and hope it was to serve by your foot, seeking the solace of the water, has found eternal solace in the bosom of Our Lady (whom let us bless for ever!). I found these clothes by the water, Madame; the tender body I found not.' The Prioress removed the toothpick, as she said, 'I recognise the colour of my livery, Sir, but do not call to mind the wearer. It may be very true what you tell me.'

'It is most woundily true, Madame,' says the Captain, with a glimpse at Mawdley's brown eyes.

'I do not doubt you, Sir,' returned the Prioress; 'but I suppose I can find boys enough in Winchester. Meantime, I am very much obliged to you for your labours.'

'Madame,' says the Captain, 'my labours, as you are pleased to call what I protest to be delights, are but begun, if (as I assume) your Ladyship needs a new stirrup-boy. I hope I know what is due from a man of my degree to a lady of yours. We chevaliers, Madame, are sworn to the succour of ladies; and I should never dare look again into the face of my friend the Duke of Milan (who dubbed me knight) if I were false to that oath. Madame, I found the husk, let me find a kernel; I found the poor weeds, let me find the sprouting bud.'

'I confess that I do not altogether understand your desires,' said the Prioress, with some hesitation; 'but if the Duke's Grace of Milan——'

'Yes, yes,' put in the Abbot, 'if the Duke's Grace of Milan——'

'Would to God, dear Madame,' cried the Captain, with real feeling, 'would to God, my Lord Abbot, I could supply you with the kind of lads that flower in my good friend's court! Hey, the bloom, the glitter, the Cupid's limbs of these dextrous youths! They will tie you a shoe, pommel you a cushion, they will trim you a wimple, swing you to a horse, dance, sing, cap verses, tell tales like young gods at play of an evening. I cannot, in this homely land, perform the impossible, alack! but I can get you a very handy youngster of my own retinue, and warrant him no lick-pot neither—if that will serve your Ladyship's turn.'

This was a delicate moment, if you please, for the Captain. Directly he had offered, he knew that he had offered too much and too soon; but there was no withdrawing. The Abbot spoke first, leaning back in his chair; plainly he was weary of the thing: 'This appears to be a business for my sister of Ambresbury to consider more with her Seneschal than with her host. Yet the gentleman's pains merit some courtesy at our hands. Sir,' he said to the Captain, 'a cup of wine with you.'

'My Lord,' said Captain Brazenhead, 'there spoke a prelate.'

The wine was brought; Captain Brazenhead drank deep. After that he began to talk, and the minstrel's office was at an end. He spoke first of his travels in remote and marvellous parts of the world—of the desert between the Church of Saint Catherine and Jerusalem; of the Dry Tree; and of how roses first came into the world. The City of Calamy and its lamentable law of marriage engaged him next; also the evil custom of the Isle of Lamary, and concerning the palace of the King of the Isles of Java. He told of trees that bear meal, honey, wine, and venom; of the herb Edelfla which is said to resemble a woman; of the realms of Tharse, of the Devil's head in the Valley Perilous, and of pismires and their hills of gold. By a transition as easy as it was abrupt, he passed to Natural Science, in which he showed himself learned without pedantry. He spoke of the nine eyes of the lamprey, and reasoned boldly for the common opinion of the ostrich, which conceives that it digesteth iron. This he said he had himself proved, though he must be excused from telling them



how. I wish you could have heard him upon the vexed question of whether hares are indeed hermaphrodites : he was dextrous in handling, fertile in parallels, discreet, subtle, provocative of thought. And he carried his hearers with him. Not so, however, in the matter of mandrakes, to whom he denied the virtue of shrieking when pulled by night. Of this the Prioress of Ambresbury was positive ; equally constant was the Abbot of Hyde in the assertion that they have thighs. The Captain laughed off his obstinacy.

He spoke next of perils, painted in battle-pieces with a broad brush as he went. He took his hearers with him to sunny foreign courts, to Venice, to Rimini, to Florence, back again to his dear Milan. They beheld him head a sortie at the siege of Rhodes ; when the Barbary corsairs chained him naked to a galley they sat still, crisping their hands, until he picked up with his toes the half of a file ; then while his escape was in the framing, while the file (wetted with spittle) ground through the hot, dense nights, ah, how they held their breath ! He whirled them off with him into the Low Countries, and bade them wait while he cut the dykes and flooded a whole countryside. He burned the Pucelle of Orleans before their dilating eyes, and owned with natural blushes that it was himself who (for reasons then found good) so nearly broke the marriage-treaty between King Harry's Grace and the daughter of King René of Anjou. In a word, by these his accounts of wide experiences, of patient, curious research, of gestes and feats of arms, rapidly delivered, copiously illustrated and exceedingly untrue, he had his auditory between his finger and thumb ; and not even a little misadventure with Mawdleyne midway of his oration could throw him off his balance. The fact is, the Captain greatly admired this fine girl, and paid her the tribute of his looks and speech a little more than he need, or was prudent. This, while it escaped the Prioress, by no means escaped the vigilance of the sour old nun who sat at her left hand, and who deliberately brought up the girl's blue riding-cloak from the back of her chair, and pulled the hood over her head so as to cover her eyes. Thus hooded like a hawk the poor girl remained ; yet, while the Captain not so much as paused in his discourse at the cruel act, he was careful to see the gentler nun on the other side wince at it, and (good husbandman !) made that serve his turn, as you will discover. The end of all was that he won over the Prioress of Ambresbury, who, on rising



from the table, begged his company for a further private conversation. By this time she had been led to believe that Captain Brazenhead had nearly lost his life in the effort to save her stirrup-boy's, that he had provided interment at his own charges and written gentlemanly letters (enclosing a sum of money) to the parents. Such are the effects of the art of suggestion in rapid narrative.

At the going out, which was done with great ceremony of ushers, a chaplain and waiting women, the gentle nun fluttered near Captain Brazenhead, wishful, but not daring, to speak. The Captain encouraged her with the sort of eye that takes you more than half-way.

'Oh, sir,' said this palpitating creature, 'Oh, sir, forgive my sister Guiscarda. She hath our charge greatly on her conscience.'

'Dear Madam,' replied the Captain soothingly, 'say no more. She hath a fine heart, I am sure, and a lofty, great soul.'

'She is too severe,' said the good nun. 'Gentleness may lead when harsh dealing may never, never drive.' Captain Brazenhead took her hand and whispered over it:

'You share the qualities of the blessed angels, dear Madam,' he said. 'Be now an angel indeed, a pious messenger. Hist! Come close. You are a friend of our fair prisoner. You are, I know it; say no more.'

The nun quailed to hear him.

'I love the dear child——'

'You do! And she loves—and she is loved—and she suffers—we suffer—they suffer—ha!'

'Oh, sir——'

'You have a red heart, Madam. Quick, quick! Take this writing—'tis for her, a balsam for a bruised little heart. Hearts go bleeding; staunch the wound. Deliver it as you can, while I hold the old lady. I dare no more. Oh, sacred bond between you and me!' He thrust into Sister Petronilla's trembling hand Percival Perceforest's love-letter. Before she could protest or implore he was gone, had stepped after the Prioress's people, and was in the thick of new oratory. Here I cannot ask you to follow him, but from what you know of his powers already displayed you must judge the end of the adventure. He enlisted Master Perceforest, in the name of his sister's son, Piers Thrustwood (you mark the disguise), into the place and breeches of the

youth who lay gagged and naked in a ditch in Winchester Meads, hard by a clump of early forget-me-nots. By this time corroborative testimony had been brought home by the second stirrup-boy, the birds'-nester.

That night Mawdley'n Touchett wrote as follows :

O heart! S(ister) P(etronilla) delivered me your paper after supper. Now it is, you know where, well kissed. I would I had you there. They pulled my hood over my face because your soldier looked at me. I saw your face the better. *I will not see you to-morrow*, as you bid me ; and yet, O shall I not see you ?

Good-night, good-night, good-night !

Your pledged,

MAWDLEY'N.

Outside this she dared to write, unable to resist the look of the words, 'To my bosom's lord, P. P., give this, M. T. dardant desyr,' and coaxed Sister Petronilla into delivering it to the Captain.

That same night Captain Brazenhead lay on his back upon the Abbot's good flock ; Percival moaned in his half-slumber and rolled about upon the beaten floor of the Common Hall ; and Sister Petronilla, having Mawdley'n's happy cheek against her bosom, tried to believe herself justified by faith, not works.

#### IV. HOW PERCIVAL PROSPERED AND THE CAPTAIN FELT JUSTIFIED.

'THE humble supplication of Lancelot Corbet, Citizen and Scrivener of London, Richard Smith, mariner, of the county of the town of Kingston-upon-Hull, of Gundrith his wife, native of Norroway, and of Giles Cruttenden of Mereworth, in the County of Kent, yeoman,' was presented in the morning early to 'the Reverend Mother, their Good Ladyship, the Prioress of Ambresbury ;' and was to the effect that her orators, devoutly disposed by motions of their spiritual parts in no wise to be mistaken, were bounden upon the pilgrimage of Saint Thomas ; but because of the disturbed state of the road, owing to these unhappy times of discord and the far purposes of Almighty God (not to be discerned by men alone), they went in peril of their lives and substance, 'being but poor folk unfriended of any.' Their prayer was that they might be allowed to join the retinue of the Prioress, and be friends of her friends,

foes of her foes; whereby they could not doubt but that Saint Thomas would be favourable to them, and the Prioress profit by the added prayers of very grateful persons. Also her petitioners, as in duty bound, would ever pray.

The Prioress was inclined to admit these honest people to her company; but Captain Brazenhead, who enjoyed some authority with her, said, 'Pass the mariner and his (apparently) heathen wife, pass Cruttenden into Kent; but leave me to deal with Corbet the Scrivener, for I know him of old for a short-faced, snarling rogue.' It was true that Captain Brazenhead knew him for his acquaintance of yesterday in the Church of Saint Swithun. When, therefore, the short-faced man came pacing towards the gates of Hyde, cloaked, strapped, and well-embaled, the Captain met him with a short 'Ha, Scrivener, dismount. None enter here.'

'By your leave, sir,' says the Scrivener.

'You have no leave of mine,' said the Captain in reply; 'therefore, come down or I give you number three.' He touched his pommel.

When the Scrivener, after multitudinous unstrappings, was on firm ground, Captain Brazenhead put on a very wise face and said: 'A word will be enough in your ear. We carry with us a person of consequence. You love Y—k.' The Scrivener went as white as the favoured rose.

'Who—what—how!'

'Precisely,' replied the Captain, 'you answer yourself. Say no more: finger on lip; eyes on the ground; ears wide—pass in.' The Scrivener went slowly in. Captain Brazenhead, his luck still holding, had spoken wiselier than he knew.

At this point you may see, if you will, Percival Perceforest demurely habited in the murrey jacket and breeches, the worsted stockings, greasy cap, and shoes of the Prioress's stirrup-boy; you may guess what glint lay behind Mawdley's Touchett's dewy eyes, with what clouded white and opening red she flushed and paled as each moment of a wondrous day brought up its alarms, to melt them suddenly in rewards; how the heart of Sister Petronilla (thick in the plot) played postman at her ribs; how greatly Captain Brazenhead behaved, flourishing the party forward out of Hants, how often his cap was in his hand to the Prioress of Ambresbury, how often her ear at his tongue's command. I cannot stay longer in Winton or I would tell you myself. It shall

suffice to say that Percival pleased. The Prioress liked handsome persons about her; Percival, whose nerves made him vivid, looked very handsome in his meekness, eagerness-on-the-leash, and high colours. They had not gone very far before a chance outburst of his in the French tongue—he sang from a full heart and quite unconsciously—gave his mistress a hint that, if the new lad was deficient in stable knowledge, he had other lore.

This happened when they were no further on their way than the two miles of deep descent and gentle rise which bring you to Headborne Worthy and its miraculous Rood, which the curious may still see, beaten, dumb, blind, but portentous, in the sacristy of that weathered shrine—a maimed Titan guarded by heroes. Sister Guiscarda had vowed a candle to this image should she be delivered from the face-ache of the previous day. She was delivered. Captain Brazenhead judged it wise to put a prayer out to usury. Mawdley in this heyday of her heart must needs praise the kindly Saints. But the Prioress sat her saddle, and Percival, seeing his true love depart, took such joy in her mere carriage of the head, had such exuberant savour of the coming day, the coming days, the coming week, which he should spend in her fragrant company, that as he loitered dreaming by the gate he forgot himself and began to sing:

Si cum j'oi la Rose aprochée,  
Un poi la trovai engroissée,  
Et vi qu'ele iere plus creüe  
Que ge ne l'avoie veüe. . . .

The Prioress pricked up her ears, but let Percival's voice go wandering on; then she said, 'Come hither, Piers.' Percival started, blushed, but obeyed.

'Dost thou know what thou singest there?'

'Yes, please you, my lady; I sang the "Roman de la Rose."'

'Thou hast that piece?'

'I had all of it by heart upon a time, my lady; but have lost the greater part.'

'Begin, if you please,' said the Prioress; so Percival began:

Maintes gens dient que en songes . . .

and had got as far as:

Ou vintiesme an de mon aage,

when the pilgrims came out of church, and a chance shot from

Mawdley's eyes threw him out. He helped his beloved to the saddle, he shored up Sister Guiscarda on hers; but the Prioress did not budge. When the confusion of horses was over, she asked her stirrup-boy aloud, whether he could continue this or any other lay?

'Madame, if it please you,' said Percival, 'I know the "Romaunt" very well; and I know the tale of the "Twelve Peers and Ganelon," and of Gallien le Rhetoré (which is very short), and also that of "Le Jouvencel," a didactic piece. Moreover, I know that story of "The Proud Lady in Amours," which they call Blanchardyn, and also "Isofere the Hardy," and "The Lays of Marie de France." There are songs in "The Ladies' Orchard" which I can sing if you wish for them, and another in the Italian tongue which begins "In the greenwood I found a shepherdess," and certain "Triumphs of Petrarch," and very pleasant sonnets which he wrote to the dear name and fame of Madame Laura his mistress—any of these I can sing, whichever the company desire——'

'Ah!' cried the Prioress, with a little gasp, 'and the airs of these divine inventions, Percival—where gat you these?'

'Madam,' replied he, blushing a little, 'some of the airs were devised by me for the lute, some in plain-song, and some in prick-song for three or four voices; and some, not yet considered, I hope to achieve as I go.'

'I ask you now,' said the Captain, with huge delight, 'is this a prodigy I have procreated or not?' It came natural to him to suppose himself the father of such a boy; and, after all, a nephew is not far removed.

The Prioress was observing the speaker with gravity. Without taking note of Captain Brazenhead's vaunt, she quietly bade him go on where he had left off. The obedient lad once more put his hands behind his back, threw up his chin, and rippled out his French syllables about love, with his own love's heart beating a little above his own, and her brown eyes burning through the top of his head. She lent him eloquence; he sang clear and loud——

Or veil cel songe rimaier  
 Por vos cuers plus fere esgaier  
 Qu'amors le me prie et commande. . . .

at which last words, if the Prioress had been wary, she could not have failed to see deep hue call unto deep. For Mawdley grew very red, and Percival was very red; and Mawdley dropped her

eyes, and Percival's travelled as high as her chin, and stayed there. Two others saw as much as they should, namely, Captain Brazenhead, who thought it too good to last, and Master Smith the mariner, who studied Percival's nose.

'Very pretty,' said the Captain to himself, 'but full of jeopardy.' He broke in to address the Prioress. 'Madame,' he said, 'the sun warns me that we should proceed. Let us have my nephew's minstrelsy on the way by all means; but let the ground-bass be our horses' hoofs. We have a far road to Alton town.'

'This swordsman is right, my lady,' said Corbet the Scrivener. 'Let your ladyship's boy sing as he walks by your ladyship's foot.'

'I could have sworn by Saint John that there was but one long nose in a pretty face in all this world,' the shipman thought to himself. 'And whom have we here?' quoth he. The Prioress took up the Scrivener.

'My boy shall walk by my foot no further than Alresford,' she said, with decision. 'Young man,' she turned to Percival, 'you are out of your station, I can see. I will look to your advancement if I love music.'

'I thank your ladyship,' says Percival; and Captain Brazenhead glossed that text with 'Certainly, I did my friend Jack a good turn when I won this throstle-cock. 'Tis a little marvel of science.'

Now, the Prioress would have had the 'Romaunt of the Rose' in its entirety, though it should have lasted her (as it would) to her first view of the golden angel on Bell Harry. But this was not to be. By the time Percival had failed at the three-hundred-and-fiftieth line, the company was feverish for something which they might possibly understand. I have spoken somewhat of the shipman who travelled with them, who came from Kingston-upon-Hull, called himself Richard Smith, and thought he knew Percival's nose. This was a bright-eyed, confident, chin-in-the-air kind of fellow, a golden-bearded, apple-coloured man, with a thin wife, very much (and too much) at his devotion, who studied the singing-boy sideways the whole time of his singing, watched his feet, his fine long hands, his sharp little chin, his small mouth, his hot little eyes, his fine long nose. He smacked his forehead and talked to himself, he explored the sky, the downs, the birds in the trees, but all to no purpose; he could not put a name to his memories. When Percival faltered, tried back, caught at a

line ahead and could not work up to it, this mariner broke in with a laugh.

'Belay there, shipmate, give over your lead,' quoth he; 'you cannot bottom it. And I, dear Lord, have been in deep water this three hours. By Blackbeard and Whitebeard, you know a mort of French words, and all of them different, it seemeth. Now, I would like to know of you, where gat you all those words? For you and I, little master, are not strangers.'

As Percival looked startled at him, 'By my head and heart, shipman,' said Captain Brazenhead, 'you have spoilt a pretty dream I was in. For to hear those fair words took me back to the sack of Orleans, where I lay lapped in plenty, and learned that tongue out of as choice a mouth as your wife hath. I have a mind to set my nephew another task. What, Piers, what, game-bird, have at you in Tuscan then!'

'Nay, Sir,' said the Prioress, 'let Piers alone. He has said enough for his turn.'

'Is this young man your nephew, soldier?' asked the shipman. Captain Brazenhead twisted his moustachios.

'I would like to see the older man who denies it,' he said, with a glitter in his eye.

The Scrivener, who feared bloodshed more than he feared Captain Brazenhead, intervened with a hasty suggestion, that he supposed the friend of the Duke of Milan might have as many nephews as he chose. 'Ah,' said the shipman darkly, 'and nieces—like the Pope—you would say!' The Captain half-drew his sword, but here the Prioress stayed him with a look. A tale from the Scrivener held them as far as their lodging at Alresford on the Hill.

*(To be continued.)*

*BLACKSTICK PAPERS. NO. 7.<sup>1</sup>*

BY MRS. RICHMOND RITCHIE.

## LINKS WITH THE PAST.

## I.

IF the Fairy Blackstick ever wastes her time on soliloquies and speculations, and anything at all strikes her very particularly after ten or twenty thousand years of experience, she might perhaps be inclined to compare the present condition of women with what it was in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. There is certainly a difference—women are freer under King Edward's rule, more independent, more impressionable, more generally interested in the affairs of life, and probably a great deal happier than they used to be sixty years ago; but notwithstanding the spread of education—perhaps because of it—they seem in some ways less dominant and important, not so much considered, as they once were. They may be authors now, but they are not such authorities; they may be teachers, but they are no longer mistresses. They seem less of personalities somehow. It is true that manners as well as dress revert to those feminine and graceful times. Flounces, flowing scarves, falling curls, open-work stockings and large silk bags were all the fashion then, and seem to be the fashion once more. Is the graceful girl whose drooping eyelash sweeps all before her coming also to the front? Is the tailor-clad amazon no longer to be absolute? Who shall venture to say? But even if women go back in dress and looks to the Forties, I cannot imagine our daughters and granddaughters really subsiding into the elegant domesticity of the ladies who wore big bonnets and tripped escorted by gentlemen in full trousers with straps, and with tassels hanging to their canes, and with stiff stocks under their chins.

Society consisted of a series of little kingdoms then, not of a number of small republics as now. I cannot imagine any person

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now alive whose name would describe a whole phase of life as some of these past names do to us. The mention of them brings back the thought, not only of the people themselves but of the good company they kept—Doctor Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, even the irrepressible Miss Anna Seward come before us surrounded by their generation. To take a more modern instance, when not long ago Mrs. Procter passed away, Charles Lamb himself seemed to die again, and the dear and gentle Barry Cornwall and all the kind and comfortable company of wits and poets who gathered round the Procters' hearth seemed to go farther off into space; so it seemed when Mrs. Kemble died, the last of her noble generation.

The stately old tree falls and we miss its spreading shade and comprehending shelter; the birds sing for us in the branches and the leaves hang to the end, and old and young gather round still, and find rest and entertainment until the hour comes when all is over. The old branches go with the last green leaves hanging to them, and the ancient stem with so many names and signs carved deep in its bark, and the memories of the storms and sunshines of nearly a century.

## II.

Eliza Horace Smith, who died in her house at Brighton but the other day, could go back to the times of Princess Charlotte of Wales, who had driven her as a child in her big coach through the London squares in company with some other children well known to the Princess. She could remember Keats and Shelley, so she has told me, and also we read of her as being desired by her father to look at a gentleman 'in ambrosial dark, and sitting beneath a wide-spreading ilex tree.' 'Do you see that man?—that is a poet,' said Horace Smith. It was Keats, already ill and suffering, who had come from Hampstead to Fulham for the day.

There is an old row of houses forgotten by the tide, and still standing at Fulham amid the new lamps and half-baked bricks, and the waste and lumber of the railway, and of the flats rising to gigantic heights. There the little peaceful row still stands, looking quaint and picturesque, awaiting its doom with tranquil dignity. If I do not mistake it was in one of these pretty old houses, an end house with a large garden then belonging to it, that Horace Smith dwelt after his second marriage. It was here that his daughter Rosalind was born and that he made the acquain-

tance of Keats and of Shelley, to whom he was so true a friend to the last. This fidelity of feeling and interest was inherited by his daughter. She has shown me page upon page in Shelley's flowing handwriting, notes to her father rather practical than poetic, requests, details, demands for books, for bills, directions about directions and packings and despatchings. The letters came from Pisa and from other places in Italy. I also saw two or three from Byron and from Leigh Hunt—one could only be amazed at the extraordinary patience of all that brilliant generation, at the careful details and calculations it went into. We who have life simplified for us by a paternal government, parcel post, money orders, telegraphs, halfpenny cards, can hardly realise the importance of minutiae in those days of straps and stocks, nor, indeed, can we quite realise the wonderful interest and response of Horace Smith, the kind man of business, man of friendship,—one hardly knows by what name to call the link between him and his beloved poet.

At Shelley's death Horace Smith found that he had paid some hundred and fifty pounds for postages and small commissions which he never asked for, so Miss Horace Smith once told me. It was to Horace Smith that Mrs. Shelley came flying in her despair after Shelley's death—the Smith family was at Versailles at the time, and to them for unfailing help and counsel the poor young lady turned. Eliza said she could remember her coming in, with her pale face and in her travelling dress after the long forlorn journey.

In the biographical preface to 'Pendennis' there is the following sentence about one of the children of Horace Smith :

In those days there was living in Brighton a charming little girl, with dark eyes and curly brown hair, and I have often heard the story how she came running into the room and said her name was Laura, and how the writer of 'Pendennis' then and there made her the godmother to his new heroine. She was the youngest of the three daughters of Horace Smith, of the 'Rejected Addresses.' She married Mr. John Round, and died still young, still dark-eyed, gay and charming. . . .

The other sisters never married, though Rosalind, the second, was one of the most beautiful of women, and rumours of rejected addresses followed her more persistently than any other person I have ever known. I remember hearing her say, laughing, to my father, 'I seem to have some natural attraction for curates; I really cannot help it—nothing would induce me to marry a curate. I suppose it must be some law of contrast which interests them in me.'

The curates of those days must have had very good taste if they admired Rosalind Smith, for no one who ever saw her will forget the bright face, the sweet voice discoursing so gaily; when her dark curls turned to snowy white, the lady was prettier if possible than before; light of step, kind of heart, sweet-tempered, and devoted to the very last to her elder sister, who survived her in sad loneliness of spirit for many years.

In the 'Life of Horace and James Smith' there are occasional mentions of Eliza, who was a great deal the eldest of the three daughters. She seems to have been delicate as a child, then she improves. 'Her bones no longer rattle as she walks,' writes her father; and finally she is ordered to be diligent, and to practise her trills and scales when she goes away from home on a visit. She was a brilliant musician in after days. She used to sing very well indeed, besides talking with flashing wit and with confidence. There is a little sonnet to her by her grandfather, written in the lively style of the period, and characteristic of the family wit, which gives one a pleasant impression of good spirits and good-humour. Tizey-Phillis had asked her grandfather to write in her album:

O, what is Cupid with his bow and dart  
 Compared to Phillis and her strange demands?  
 The little archer only aims at hearts:  
 She takes our hearts—then asks us for our hands.  
 But will no Damon check the wild career,  
 And strive, at least, to shorten the research—  
 Nor dare to turn the tables on the fair  
 By asking her to sign his album in the church?

When poor Phillis was still quite young her beauty was disfigured and her nose hopelessly broken by a terrible fall, which, so I have heard, influenced her whole fate. As she saw herself in the glass afterwards, her heart was heavy indeed; she abandoned a hope then very dear to her, and she made a vow to herself with tears never to let her own mischance in life embitter her feelings or lessen her sympathy in the happiness of others. This vow she endeavoured to keep with the last response of her failing powers, trying to the end to realise, and, in a measure, to enjoy, the happiness of other lives, though she had been left lonely by Fate, and all her generation had gone before her.

## III.

Brighton in the days of the Horace Smiths filled the place which some foreign watering-places now hold. It was a playing-field for many hard-worked statesmen. Literary men came there, painters, actors. It had also a society of its own. Rich Americans did not then exist, but the Duke of Devonshire of those days lived much at Brighton, and entertained. Other people of mark and means had their houses there; many notabilities used to stay there for the season: among these came Harriet Mellon, the well-known Duchess of St. Albans. They came, not in an hour for a week-end as now, but driving down in post-chaises, with their footmen and attendants, and elaborately establishing themselves. We read in the 'Newdigate Letters' of the difficulties they often had in finding suitable accommodation for their various followings. To all this spirited society Eliza was welcomed. Her father was evidently proud of her position and success, of her fine singing, her merry talk.

She used to like to dwell on all these times, on bygone heroines who eloped, on the various bucks and dandies who fought duels and dazzled the onlookers. 'You people are so dreadfully young,' said Tizey not long ago to two respectable, middle-aged visitors; 'you don't remember any of the people I am telling you about.' In the present as in the past she liked the presentable, the agreeable; no one knew better how to appreciate.

'The bright, keen-witted woman whom I delighted to listen to,' writes an old friend to whom, as usual, I turned for suggestion and help. 'I never felt that I really knew her,' he adds, 'but I felt very grateful to her, and rather amazed at her cordial regard, which never changed.'

Another of her friends, after a long absence, going to call, and standing waiting outside the door, was ashamed and touched by the unmistakable pleasure and affection expressed by the invalid in her chimney corner. It was there, as she sat with her back to the window, against which the wind was beating, and with her hands before her in a little muff she liked to use, that Tizey made that well-known answer in reply to the conventional 'I am afraid you feel the change of the weather,' 'Yes,' she answered gravely, 'I feel it, and I suffer from it, and I tell myself I am part of the universe.'

The recording angel may often have suppressed a smile as

he put down some brilliant droll saying of Tizey's. He will have had but few effacing tears to drop upon the page. Bacon writes of talk that should be kept salt not acid. Tizey's talk was salt, not bitter. Her sallies concerned things rather than personal feelings. If all the world strolls up and down before your windows it is impossible not to be amused and to speculate upon its comings and goings, and Tizey speculated; but she could talk of other serious things clearly, definitely, and courageously. 'Nobody but Boswell or Caroline Fox can remember that enchanting, evanescent thing, good talk,' writes a correspondent of a much younger generation, who had seen a great deal of her when she was a girl, and who recalls an amusing saying one day, when Miss Horace Smith was staying at Cannizaro. Some of the party had been to the theatre, and on her return Miss Horace Smith was asked whether she had enjoyed the play. 'It was all very dull,' she said, 'the play was dull and the theatre nearly empty—there was nobody in the boxes, nobody in the stalls, not even an ox!' Who ever imagined a stalled ox in such juxtaposition before?

When Mr. Briggs was murdered in a train going to Brighton, a man was suspected because Mr. Briggs's watch was discovered hidden in his boot. 'What of that?' cries Miss Horace Smith; 'I have a clock in my stocking, but I didn't murder Mr. Briggs.'

It was on the terrace of this same pleasant Cannizaro, with its waving woods and spreading lawns, that the writer once heard Miss Smith laughing and replying to a respectful enquirer, 'Yes, I suppose we certainly had what people call a *salon*, but what we piqued ourselves most upon was that it never led to a *salle-à-manger*.'

It is a received fact that people cannot eat and talk comfortably at the same time, and the superiority of the wit and the conversation of those bygone educated tea-tables to that of our more elaborate dinner-tables may be easily explained. Our generation writes when it wishes to be heard, that one wrote less, talked more, and more to the point; it read more thoroughly in its own books, and not in Mudie's only; and people having fewer acquaintances gave themselves more to their friends.

The two Miss Horace Smiths in their little Brighton world did something not unlike what the Miss Berrys—Horace Smith's strawberries as he loved to call them—were doing in the quiet house in May Fair, where the light over the doorway meant that the ladies were at home and ready to receive good company in the

unpretentious grey rooms. The pretty little house in Sellwood Place was always lighted up with friendly welcome.

## IV.

Miss Horace Smith once told me a story. It was long and complicated, but she assured me she had told it my father just before he wrote 'Pendennis,' and that it had partly suggested the opening chapters. It concerned a family living in Brighton, somewhere near Kemp Town. There was a somewhat autocratic father and a romantic young son who had lost his heart to the housemaid and determined to marry her. The father made the young man give his word of honour that he would not marry clandestinely, and then having dismissed him rang the bell for the butler. To the butler this Major Pendennis said, 'Morgan' (or whatever his name was), 'I wish you to retire from my service, but I will give you 200*l.* in bank-notes if you will marry the housemaid before 12 o'clock to-morrow.' The butler said, 'Certainly, sir,' and the young man next morning was told of that which had occurred. As far as I remember a melancholy and sensational event immediately followed; for the poor young fellow was so overwhelmed that he rushed out and distractedly blew his brains out on the Downs behind the house, and the butler meanwhile, having changed his 200*l.*, sent a message to say that he had omitted to mention that he had a wife already, and that this would doubtless invalidate the ceremony he had just gone through with the housemaid.

But Tizey's *forte* was not as a *raconteuse*. She had too much rapid wit, and shall I say too much active good sense; she could not dwell gently and suggestively on the forerunning facts and indications which go to make a story seem real, and to place it vividly before the hearer. It was as a cheerful and witty commentator upon the daily story of life that she was remarkable. She had plenty of prejudices, good old conservative prejudices; she did not at all believe that all men were equal in the eyes of heaven; she would sweep away a whole terrace-full of respectable persons from her door with old-fashioned spirit and decision. Some one once recommended a parlour-maid to her when she was long past eighty. 'Your girl came; I sent her away at once,' she said; 'she wore spectacles. Imagine what would be thought if I allowed a woman in spectacles to open the door. People would imagine I was at my last gasp.'

It cannot be denied that sisters make charming hostesses, wherever one finds them keeping house together and hospitably inclined. For one thing, it is a gain to have two hostesses instead of one, and sisters are accustomed to one another and can understand each other without a word and instinctively feel what is going on: they can talk together of quite different things and yet keep tune. Many a sisterly shrine must occur to each one of us, with warming hearth and pleasant words of welcome. It matters not whether it is in Brighton or in London, past or present; or in murky Manchester or on a Cornish crag, or by some distant Cumberland lake side; one always seems to be at ease where reflected kindness lights up the friendly hours of companionship and rest.

## IN GUIPÚZCOA.

BY MRS. WOODS.

### III

#### THE VALLEY OF IRAURGUI AND A BASQUE WEDDING

IN the green valley of Iraurgui the black figures, young and old, that pass up and down from the College of Loyóla stir no reflections and no feelings save those of simple reverence and affection. The College lends importance to the little neighbourhood and the Jesuit Fathers are kind and well-beloved. The Church is evidently the dominant factor in life to the inhabitants of the valley. They even know something of the politics of the external world when they touch the Church. Ignorant men and women, 'sitting on the alehouse bench,' condoled with me on the sad state of my country—assumed to be France—where the Fathers were being driven out. 'But they will return,' said an old man—and probably he was right. 'Like the good Fathers here. Thirty years ago they also were driven out and the College was filled with soldiers. They say this Government means to turn them out; but if it does the Fathers will return again.' And here certainly he was right.

In these remote districts of Spain the power of the Church is not only irresistible, but probably no one even thinks of resisting it. 'In some countries there are Protestants,' said to me fourteen-year-old Juanita of the inn, impressively. 'There was once a Protestant in Azpéitia, and'—here she rolled her head and her black eyes with awful solemnity—'he died.' Whether she thought this misfortune befell Protestants alone, or whether the blessed air of the valley proves in the long run fatal to the heretical constitution, I did not ascertain. But probably a Liberal also would die at Azpéitia. My friend Doña Saturnina seems to think so. At any rate she does not wish it mentioned to the neighbours that her brother at San Sebastian is a Liberal.

The Basques of the country are Carlists, not from any abstract Legitimist feeling, but because Don Carlos is pledged to restore to them their *fueros*, their fiscal independence. 'We shall be



ruined by this taxation,' they have been saying for seventy years; and now they add—'It is the loss of the Americas' (Cuba and the Philippines) 'we have to pay for.' And the northern provinces of Spain do pay for that, but not by taxes to the Government; which spent much on 'the Americas' and got little out of them. The manufacturing provinces suffer by the loss of a protected market for their goods, which the United States tariff now keeps out. But although the Liberals of the towns and the Carlists of the country are alike discontented with the present Government, there will be no Carlist rising so long as the Church is satisfied. And why should it not be satisfied? The Austrian dowager Queen is as devoted to the Church and to the Jesuits as her long ago Austrian predecessor, Marianne of the unhappy, sulky face, at whose bidding Fontana designed this College of Loyóla.

At first sight the straight façade of the wings, with their small square windows, appears intolerably dreary, nor is the dome handsomer than a dome can help being. Nevertheless the building makes a feature in the landscape and ends by imposing. And the sweep of the immense semicircular portico, with its stately flight of steps and large carved adornments, in a greyer, softer stone than that of the building, and the statue of the saint standing up white against its inner shadow: these have a real beauty of their own, besides the strangeness of them here. And instead of the market square and the flower-sellers one might expect to find before such a portico, there runs along the front of the College a *berceau* of clipped horse-chestnuts, and under it Juanita of the inn keeps a stall where she sells photographs, rosaries, and other little wares of devotion. For flowers, why should one sell them here to-day, when the whole of the valley is like a bunch of May-blossom? From the gilded gloom of the church it is good to step into the portico and look out over the white blossom of the clipped chestnut trees. On the hill-sides the coppices of dwarf beech are clothed in new emerald, and round the red roofs of the homesteads the apple trees are in bloom. Above them and beyond the little town of Azpéitia, grey mountains stand up stark and bare, save for the golden veil of the sunshine. A foot-path runs beside the river from Loyóla to Azpéitia. The river is of the prattling sort, a mountain stream, and midway between the two breaks into a waterfall. A bare-legged girl crosses boldly just beneath it, holding her scarlet petticoat high. Pale chestnut-coloured oxen in flaxen *toupées* are soberly pacing the fields.

A peasant walks behind, holding the harrow, another before them, guiding their movements with a long wand. Among the green-growing crops gangs of men and women are working side by side, blue-clothed for the most part, but brightened at intervals by a pink blouse or a red petticoat.

Azpéitia has its picturesque points. I do not know whether I should reckon as one that the inhabitants of all ages sit in the streets making the sandal-shoes called *alpargatas*. The English visitors on the other side of the frontier know and value them under the name of *espargates*, but generally speaking they are worn by Basques only. On one side of the square is a clean and spacious market, such as in England would not be found in so small a town. The Urola runs behind it and is spanned a little lower by an ancient bridge, guarded by a *casa torre* of grey stone, intact, with its flanking tourelles. It is still inhabited by its ancient family, which gives a name to the bridge and to a narrow street beyond, leading to a small open space before the parish church. These Basque churches, with their high square bodies and low square towers, are called of the Byzantine style in books, but they do not greatly resemble anything except themselves and the plainest and oldest churches of Spain—those not lightened and embroidered with Gothic graces. Everywhere, in church and chapel, intrudes the same gaudy, florid ornamentation. Other countries have in three hundred years gone through many variations of taste; and even if they had all been variations of bad taste, there would have been some relief in the variety. But in Spanish churches there has reigned for three hundred years the same bad taste; only the power of execution has got worse and worse. It is also the same bad taste which the Jesuits take with them wherever they go.

The Baptistery is, as in other churches of the kind, a very low arched recess at the west end. Here is the iron font in which Inigo Loyóla was baptised. But Doña Saturnina says I must see the chapel for the renovation of which a pious lady has recently paid so many thousand duros. It is painted pink, sky-blue and gold, and stuck about with divers images of the usual kind. But there, very quiet and straight among the simpering Madame Tussaud saints, lies a little figure, either less than life-size or the figure of a little man, in faintly gilded armour, his helmet closed. 'That?' replies Doña Saturnina, passingly, 'Oh, that is the tomb of a *Conquistador*. Look at the St. John. He

is very beautiful and quite new.' But I am thinking of the *Conquistador*.

What a fine audacious heart was that which, for the glory of Spain, beat in this little Basque body four hundred years ago! And it was from this very mountain valley that he went out on such an adventure as none now may undertake, because behind this man and his fellows the world grew smaller, the oceans no longer infinite. If he could open the closed vizor and tell us here the whole gallant story of it, from the first westward plunge of the small deep-bodied ship in the green Atlantic rollers and the first footing of the strange new land; the wild incredible ride over the necks of nations, through fairy hoards and splendours of gold, the life among men like creatures of a dream, the return to the old world, the old life, surely hardly less strange. Yet here he was content to rest in the big church of his squalid native town—little altered, one guesses, since he went up and down in it—and here his tomb stands, a monument to something greater than himself; to the glory and the shame, the achievement and the failure of Imperial Spain. But something of the traditions of past greatness survives. Doña Saturnina's cousin, who keeps a pleasant garden, a summer-house, and a cowshed in the midst of the town, is 'an American;' that is, he has made his little fortune in 'the Americas' and, like the *Conquistador*, come home to enjoy it.

Doña Saturnina is a black-eyed, white-haired little woman, wearing the ever-graceful mantilla, so foolishly abandoned by the upper classes. She ekes out a meagre pension by making shirts at two reals—less than fivepence apiece. I feel sure she cannot read, for she finds various excuses for getting me to read her the notices on church doors. Nevertheless she is a pleasant, refined companion, with that sympathetic intelligence of the southern woman which compensates for so much. Together we patrol the valley of Iraurgi from Azpéitia to Azcoitia—in which place are some busy-looking little factories—and see such a number of convent churches as it would be tedious to describe. There are some handsome things in one, a convent for rich women only, but for the most part they are hideous, these gifts and decorations which year after year pour into the churches at the cost of I know not what annual expenditure in duros; but certainly something very large for so poor a country. It is but a few years ago that I saw the *repatriados*, the maimed and starving soldiers of Spain

begging their bread, and was told that the country was really too poor to support them. In the church of the rich nuns was the most wonderful modern needle-made lace I ever beheld. It was a Virgin's robe which appeared to have been spun by an intelligent spider out of a superior kind of gossamer: but it had been worked in the convent.

'Yes, the nuns work beautifully,' says Doña Saturnina, 'and they sell their work very cheap. That is why one can earn so little here by needlework.' She does not speak of the nuns with bitterness, as she does of the taxes. She mentions this fact concerning them as she might mention one concerning the climate or the soil. But to me the nuns become a nightmare. In the valley of Iraurgi there must be some hundreds, in all Spain many thousands of these useless shadowy lives, passed not in the education of children or in the care of the sick, but in the trailing chant of offices and the production of superfluous needlework. But, in spite of all, nature and the race are still fertile in Guipúzcoa. I climbed one day where a mountain path ran past a red-roofed homestead set among apple-blossom. An old woman like a St. Anna sat on the threshold, nursing two children in her lap. A certain squalor about the place made me fear there was poverty in the pretty homestead. On the contrary: the rich bride of the morrow, the wonder of the neighbourhood, was to come from that very house, the sister of the householder. And although her former master and mistress in Azpéitia contributed a handsome sum to her dowry, a great part of it was her share of the family inheritance.

The wedding announced itself in an unpleasant manner. In the dimness of slumber I thought the early diligence was letting off fog-signals. It was the boys beginning to let off *coyetes*: things somewhat more noisome and much more dangerous than crackers. Weddings must begin early in Guipúzcoa, or there would not be time for them. The ceremony was at seven o'clock, in the parish church of Azpéitia, and after it the bride's relations provided a banquet in the town to which a hundred and seventy persons sat down. This lasted several hours. Meantime two ox-wagons came creaking past the inn door; low basket-work wagons with solid slices of tree-bole for their wheels; these were filled with furniture, bedding and clothes, so that had not all been so smart and new, you would have thought a house-moving forward. But this was the bride's dowry and trousseau.

The pale-coloured oxen, the men with staves, the loaded wagons pass slowly over the grey bridge towards the bridegroom's house; which is larger than the bride's, but not much cleaner. There another, and a mightier, banquet is prepared. The same hundred and seventy persons are fed again; though how they contrive even to stand, to say nothing of sit, in the house is a puzzle. While the feast proceeds the ox-wagons are unharnessed in a small yard at the back, and the neighbours begin to collect to see the exhibition of their contents. Rows of chairs are placed round the yard and matrons young and old, with their babies and little girls, take their seats for the performance. The boys who are not eating are letting off *coyotes* over our heads. They have been at it ever since five o'clock in the morning, but they are not tired. Doña Saturnina is the only person who is at all frightened; so I have to pretend to be, lest she should feel the world too cold.

About three o'clock the wedding-guests began to come out, looking somewhat flushed and foolish, as is the way of wedding-guests all the world over. There are many more men than women in the party, two banquets in succession being doubtless considered too good a thing to be lightly squandered on the inferior sex. To-morrow there will be a third.

Gradually the family come out. I cannot distinguish the bridegroom among a group of young men in short blue blouses and black *gorros*; which, with the small mantillas or handkerchiefs worn by the older women present, are the only touches of picturesque costume among them. Presently the bride comes out. She is not at all the typical Basque, but tall and gaunt, with high cheekbones and a high colour, like a Scotchwoman. And alas! her bridal costume is a tweed coat and skirt, seemingly cut out with a knife and fork—somewhere in Germany. But whatever the costumes, the customs are old. The bride is expected to provide the bedroom furniture, and she has done it handsomely. There is a whole suite in a shiny light polished wood, just like the suites you used to buy in a box at the toy-shop of my infancy, but very large, even for a real house. Besides a miscellaneous collection of crockery, there is a milk-pail and a distaff with floating ribbons. Not a merely symbolic distaff, typifying industry, but one for daily use.

These things are taken out and placed in a row by the servants. Then the real ceremonious exhibition of the trousseau

begins. The bride seats herself with her mother-in-law, in default of a mother, by her side, and a space is cleared before her. A sister and a sister-in-law are the exhibitors. First, the large spring mattress is laid on the not very clean ground and on the top of that come four other excellent mattresses. This forms the foundation of the pile, on which the two women spread the rest of the innumerable articles the rich bride brings with her: scarlet-covered pillows and bed-linen not merely nice but ornamental. I doubt whether there is another country in Europe where there is so little virtuosity in bed-linen as in England. I remember a house in Corsica where there was no inside staircase and you could have put your hand between the boards of the bedroom floor into the room below; but the hand-woven linen was not only clean, it was handsomely embroidered. The Corsican blankets were indeed open to criticism; not so those of the rich bride, which were of the first quality. The *dou* of the performance, however, in the eyes of the neighbours, was the crochet coverlid, such as may be seen on German hotel beds. The sisters spread out every sheet, pillowcase, towel and tablecloth with careful pride, but before they came to the end of the bride's clothes even they tasted satiety. She brought not only twenty-four chemises for herself, but a dozen shirts for the bridegroom: which seemed to be expected of her. As bit by bit was added, the edifice before her loomed prodigious. Beyond the curiousness of its exhibition there was nothing curious in the *trousseau*. It might have been the joint *trousseaux* of six English girls in the bride's position. Yet I will boldly say for my much-abused countrywomen that such girls would not, in the present day, have produced outer garments equal in horror to those which heaved the bosoms of my matronly neighbours with long sighs of admiration. Like all populations who have recently abandoned a national costume, the Spaniards and Spanish Basques have a passion for the gaudy and over-trimmed in dress.

When we at length reached the boots and shoes, the student of Saragossa sighed wearily and said he should never marry. He was the son of the landowner, and consequently it had been his doom to sit through the banquets, and now, sitting on a wall with a young friend, to preside over the exhibition of the *trousseau*. But he had a face marked by that expression of gentleness not uncommon in educated Spaniards—a particular expression never seen, so far as I have observed, on the faces of Northern men—

and he bore his fate, not merely as an Englishman might have done, with fortitude, but with exemplary amiability.

When the last of the small fry of the *trousseau* had been laid on the pile, a tray was placed on the top of all. Then a man stepped solemnly out of the crowd. The crowning moment had come. The bride's dowry was to be counted out. The man, her brother, it seemed, laid a few notes on the tray, stating their amount in Basque. That was nothing; the best was to come. The rest of the dowry was counted out in hard money, in silver duros. He went on counting in a loud monotonous voice as he flung the ringing duros into the tray. It was ten thousand reals in all, and between each thousand he folded his cloak about him and made a dramatic pause, so that the audience supposed he had finished and made ready to exchange remarks upon the amount. When, lo and behold! he would start again, flinging his duros down, till he had added another thousand reals to the dowry. That bride will be a highly respected woman among her neighbours for the rest of her natural life. With the fall of every thousand reals one heard the foundations of that life-long respect being laid deep and broad.

At length the counting was really finished. Ten thousand reals! It is not so much as it sounds, yet for a tenant-farmer's bride it is much. 'To her that hath shall be given' appears to be as true in Guipúzcoa as in London; for when the last silver duro had fallen into the tray, the presents began to literally shower in. The student of Saragossa flung a parcel of money neatly on the top of the dowry; then from the audience in what served as the dress-circle, blankets, household linen, and fancy articles were thrown on to the pile, or caught flying by the sisters. But by this time another shower, a less welcome shower from the clouds, had begun to pitter-patter around us. So Doña Saturnina and I slipped unobserved from the circle and went our respective ways.



### *A SON OF EMPIRE.<sup>1</sup>*

THROUGH the babble of talk that filled the grimy room which to the Boon Companion was at once kitchen and guest-hall, Giro Adamo sat silent. He had supped well, he had drunk wisely, his feet were straddled towards the hearth, his great boots tucked out of his way beneath the settle. He was warmed, he was comforted, and his thoughts were leagues away from the smoke-stained inn of San Gimignano.

To no one else but himself would he admit it, but Giro Adamo was growing old. He had lived his life, every day of it; lived it generously when he could, poorly when he must, but always with zest as became a man whose cheeriness was as unfailing as his appetite; and in the living he had seen strange sights. Who did not, who kept his eyes open in Italy in the days when Popes and Emperors wrestled for the mastery, now one winning, now the other, and each grinding the peoples as mill-stones grind dry wheat?

But if Giro Adamo was silent, seeing visions of life and death in the huge fireplace, void except for its heap of crackling sticks with the one great log of gnarled olive root piled on top, he had already done his share of talking, telling an incredible tale of one of the Great Captains he had served. It was of this dead hero of the Ghibellines that the folk of the inn still talked.

'Yes, yes,' said Gian Buti, the host, anxious to curry favour with one of the few of the Boon Companion's guests, who, supper being ended, still called for Vernage. 'Yes, yes; a brave man, whether we are Whites or Blacks—and why we should be one or other I cannot tell; eat, drink, and pay your score is my motto, but White or Black we must admit there was no braver man on either side than Messer Provenzano Salvani.'

At the name Giro Adamo roused himself and looked round.

'Eh? What dost thou know of men, thou skewerer of chicken gizzards? A quart pot for a head, a cask for a belly, and

<sup>1</sup> Dante, *Purg.* xx. 68.



two lean skids to prop it up! There is Gian Buti! I never knew but one of your kind with a soul nobler than his own stew-pan.'

'Still,' persisted Buti, letting the scorn slip past him unheeded until the time should come to remember it—that is to say, until the making up of Messer Giro's reckoning—'Still, Provenzano Salvani was a great captain and a brave man.'

'Granted, but I have seen braver.'

From behind, one of the little group of travelling merchants who formed part of the inn's company leaned forward, touching the man-at-arms upon the shoulder.

'Tell us, Messire; or, if it pleases you better, tell us of that innkeeper you spoke of just now, for I think you are hard on Gian Buti.'

Drawing his feet under the settle Adamo turned and, not for the first time, took stock of his fellow-guests. Never were the mill-stones heavier, rarely was the wheat of life more finely ground, than at that time, and it behoved him to be cautious in his speech. But the purse of this strolling adventurer, a man whose simple code was to take pay from no more than one side at a time, was running low, and it also behoved him to win a patron if he could. The roads were as unsafe as roads in a Christian country could be, and perhaps this man of bales, for whom Giro felt a profound contempt, might have need of a sword: therefore he answered very civilly:

'Had it been you, Messire, it had been different. It needs a stout heart, these times, to face the mountain paths, for there are as many thieves from here to Siena as were ever betwixt Jericho and Jerusalem; but that a mischristener of sour vinegar should so speak angered me. Who is he to judge between man and man? between a Provenzano Salvani, who dies cheerily at the head of his troop, as a gentleman must at times, giving as good as he gave, and a Conradin of Hohenstaufen?'

'Conradin of Hohenstaufen!' Down with a crash fell the huge wooden beads which a Franciscan monk, one of the inn's company, had been fumbling over in the corner. 'What did you know of that pestilent——'

'Softly, softly,' cut in Giro Adamo, 'curse me the dead no curses. He lived but seventeen years in the world, and what he was in them is between him and his maker. All I say is that the boy died a man.'

‘And you saw him die?’

‘As near as I am to you.’

‘There in Naples?’

‘Where else? Does a man die in two places in the world? Yes, there in Naples; but I saw him before that. I was with Salvani in Siena when Conradin crossed the Alps with his Germans, hunting a throne that was not empty. He was then King of Jerusalem, and claimed both Naples and the Two Sicilies, which Charles of Anjou held. We of Siena did not love the Germans, but we hated them less than we hated Charles, and so Provenzano sent me, with three hundred more, to meet him in Verona. There he was quartered in Mastino della Scala’s house, which stands at the corner of that great square which was once the forum, and there, three days after we entered the city, we were drawn up in a triple row to see him pass to his proclamation.

‘Though not sixteen, he was a fine figure of a lad as he rode by on his white horse, Frederic of Austria on the one side, Della Scala on the other, and his kinsman Lancia behind; a noble group and all dead, all rolled in red shrouds every one, Mastino assassinated, the others—but that is the story. Opposite our troop he reined up.

“Who are these? My Italians from Siena? Then, by the bones of my father, we shall ride south by Siena. Who knows but we may pick up another few score like them? Draw in behind me, my Italians from Siena, and see the beginning of that which, with your help, I have crossed the Alps to finish,” and so, with a wave of the hand, rode on, a man’s brave words in a boy’s laughing mouth.

‘Out by the corner of the square he turned, we following as he bade us, on past the ancient church of Santa Maria where the Scaligers lie buried, and down to the river’s bank. This we followed down stream, turned in again to the city by way of San Fermo Maggiore, and so on to the Arena.

‘Ah! faith of an Adamo! but that was a scene! The broken, rubble-choked terraces were packed with life rising tier on tier; Germans of the Empire, Lombards, Tuscans, Arragonese, the flash of fire from casque and corslet, sober citizens, gay stuffs that covered gayer hearts of the women more than half in love with the gallant boy who had come so far in his clutch at a throne, and who was yet to cross, not Italy alone but the bounds of the eternal world

in the same quest. What a fluttering of pennons, skirts, and kerchiefs there was ; what a silence while the podestà read out the proclamation of Conradin, King of Jerusalem and all the rest of the full-mouthed titles ; and what a roar split the air as the lad, bareheaded as becomes even kings who call God to witness, swore upon the Gospels to preserve the rights of the Church, the liberties of the people, and to free the country of his fathers from the tyranny of Anjou ; surely never, not even in the old gladiatorial days, had the grey stones echoed to such a shout.

‘From Verona we marched to Pavia by way of Cremona, thence to Pisa, and so at length to our own Siena.

‘There it was,’ said Giro Adamo, looking round him at the Franciscans in the corner, ‘there it was that the mischief began. That, at least, is my opinion, though it was not King Conradin’s, for the mischief came, as half the mischief of the world comes, by way of a pretty face. She was in the train of Cardinal Agostino——’

‘Ho ! ho !’ laughed Gian Buti, with a leer, ‘a priest’s niece ? Yes, yes, we’ve heard of such.’

‘Hold thy peace, scullion,’ thundered Adamo, ‘a priest’s niece she was in true earnest, a sweet pure woman fooled to unworthy ends, her one fault that she meddled in politics, which no woman yet could understand and remain as sweet as did Gemma Casalodi. From the first the King drew to her, and within a week she was half sister to him, half goddess, and where the Cardinal’s direct attack failed hers from the oblique succeeded.

‘Agostino had powers from the Pope to promise that if Conradin would retire for the time the curse of the Church would be lifted and the crown secured to him on the death of Charles—a pretty little bubble of emptiness which the lad blew to nothing with a word.

“I am not here for myself,” said he, “but for love of my suffering people. No man knows better than Clement what Naples has endured at the hands of Anjou ; or if he does not know let him ask Benevento, if indeed there is a soul in Benevento left alive to answer. If a wolf is ravening the flock, would you have the sheep-dog lie by the fire till the beast dies of old age ? What I have begun that I shall end, Lord Cardinal, God helping me.”

‘Then it was that Gemma Casalodi stepped upon the stage. Not to persuade him to retire ; no, no, but to delay the advance

and so give Charles of Anjou the time he so sorely needed to concentrate his strength. How she played upon him, who knows? or rather, who that is a man does not know! Seeing that she was a ripe woman and he an over-ripe boy full of a chivalrous conceit.

'As I stood guard at an open door I heard enough to catch her line of argument. It was the afternoon of the day on which Conradin had said No to the Pope.

"How could they ask you, my King?" said she, going down on a knee to him, her hands clasped, and looking up into his face with eyes that might easily have set an older brain whirling. "You! the paladin of a new crusade, the saviour of the poor, the opener of the prison-house that the oppressed may go free. I knew Conradin could never stoop to such an infamy."

"And yet," said he, all smiles as she meant him to be, and taking her hands in his to raise her, but making no haste to loose them again, "You have known me but eight days."

"Ah, Sire," sighed she, "there are times when a woman's wit sees clearer than grey wisdom; and now I wonder if the same green wit foresees the next step the King will take? I hope so, for his honour and my credit's sake."

"And what is that?" asked the pleased fool, and rightly pleased; I would have been so in his place, though from the background I saw Salvani biting his lip and looking aslant at the two from under bent brows. He trusted neither Cardinal's frock nor woman's skirt, did Salvani, and in the end he was right. She had her answer ready.

"That my King will pause to gather up that retinue of strength which becomes his glorious dignity: and that when he marches he will march upon Viterbo."

"Viterbo?" cried Conradin, "Viterbo? where Pope Clement is?"

"Oh, I am foolish," said she, looking aside, then back again to his face, her eyes troubled, "a woman hungry for the King's honour. The Pope is the father of us all, and yet—and yet—is he not the King's foe? and would not Naples, fired by the King's zeal on her behalf, open her heart of love yet wider? I am but a woman, and so judge from myself—ah! what have I said? Something I should not? If I have, forgive me: I was wroth to think my uncle could dream that Conradin was afraid to march to his destiny."

'But if she were wroth her anger did not choke her words, for she went promptly on :

"From Viterbo it is but a step to Rome, where the Senator, Henry of Castile, is the King's friend. Surely to be crowned in Rome would draw all Italy to your arms?"

'At the time I thought her honest, and, simple man-at-arms as I was, the thrill in her voice fired me as I saw it fired the King; but later I knew it was a lure, and I can well believe that within an hour she was saying to Cardinal Agostino:

"Did I do well, my uncle?"

'And that he answered:

"Excellently well, my niece. Now he will defy Christendom through its Bishop and head; he will loose his hungry kites on Rome to his own harrying, and while he lingers Charles will gather power to crush him."

"But no harm shall come to him?"

"He must take his risks of battle; these he takes in any case, and beyond these he is safe."

'That I take to have been the treaty, and whether any but she was honest in it is beyond my judgment. The one sure thing is that she won her point. Provenzano raged, di Lancia argued, the whole council protested, but neither fire nor wisdom was a match for the gentleness of Gemma Casalodi. We dallied in Siena, wasted time at Pieve, and pranced like fools under the walls of Viterbo: all to the honour of Cardinal Agostino's shrewd wit spoken by the mouth of a pretty woman.

'Then followed what his Eminence had foreseen. Across the ramparts leaned Clement, crucifix in hand, his court of cardinals quaking round him as our lances took the sun in a thousand sparks. But Clement never quaked—no offence, Messires Franciscans, that I speak of these things familiarly as a common man thinks and speaks. Up in the air he thrust the gilded cross, shaking it.

"Whom God has cursed is cursed," he cried in a thunder, "and these sheep go to the slaughter." While from below the King clenched his fists and menaced, as boys will when they can do no more.

'It galls me to think of these things and what followed, the mockery of a king housed in the Lateran at Rome, and playing at royal dignity, of a downheld people pretending an enthusiasm they never felt, and Henry of Castile, the Senator, seeing grimly

to it that both King and people filled their parts well : galls me, I say, galls me worse than the memory of the tragedy yet to come.

'To tell the truth of these Roman days would fill an hour: they were the last the poor lad was to taste of even the pretence of power and kingliness, and, the heart of hot August though it was, I, Giro Adamo, for one was not sorry when at length we marched eastward into the Abruzzi to meet Charles of Anjou in handgrips for the crown.

'We met at Tagliacozzo, and all Italy knows what followed. If Anjou and his Whites fought like men, we of the Blacks fought like devils, though I say it who was one of them, and had we but had as much craft as courage we would have scattered them like dust against the steepes of the ravine. But we were fists and fingers without a brain. Di Lancia was a man of phrases rather than of fields, what at his age could the King know of the cunning of battle? And as for Henry of Castile—that for Henry of Castile,' and Adamo snapped his fingers with a crack.

'The fight was almost won when from behind a mask of trees and boulders, ground we thought too rough for horsemen, in swept the foxy Frenchman Saint Valery, and made an end of our jubilation. Such a cast of the net it was. Giovanni Frangipane had the King prisoner, and no man of great name escaped. Even I was taken, and then it was that I turned Guelf.'

Pausing he looked round the smoky twilight of the room as if he challenged reproach, nor was it long in coming. Thrusting his thumb out between his fingers in a fig the Franciscan leaned forward, wagging his hand scornfully.

'Turned your coat?' said he, clicking his tongue, 'and thenceforth shouted for Charles of Anjou?'

'It was either so shout or grow dumb in a halter,' answered Giro indifferently, 'and for what I did I had high precedent. Has not the Holy Father himself both cursed and blessed before now? The courage of the tomb is very splendid, but it is a cold courage and my blood was still hot. That there were some had that courage I grant. These were left behind us in the shade of the great trees, and after thirty years of life I still think I had the best of it. Their hanging did no good to King Conradin and my living did no harm.

'Once he had his prey in his net Charles of Anjou made no delay, but rolled in on Naples like a torrent. But of the terrors

of that grim march not much need now be said. Those who were for Anjou and the Pope he sucked as a leech sucks, while those for Hohenstaufen he burned with fire, ravished, slew, effaced, and except to suck or burn he never halted till he had his prisoners lodged in the Castello dell' Ovo.

'God keep us all from such an iniquity as the Castello dell' Ovo, with its oozy sweat from the sea and crawl of rats: better rot in the shade at Tagliacozzo than in the cellars of the Castello dell' Ovo, say I, and I have seen men, my fellows, do both. Not that even Charles of Anjou dared thrust the great-grandson of Barbarossa down to these dismal depths. The world that commonly tolerates murder in high places will not always pardon indignities to unfortunate greatness, so Conradin was worthily lodged, and among others I took my turn to guard him.

'That was Anjou's cunning. If there were intrigues and plots they would surely ripen through us who served the Guelf by compulsion and so be the easier traced. But there were no intrigues, no plots; the King trusted in the treaty with Agostino: but when his Eminence arrived, with Gemma Casalodi and her women with him, it happened that I, being about the Castle, heard more than most.

'The treaty! None but a woman and a chivalrous boy whom that woman had blinded could dream that the Butcher of Benevento, brother in arms to his holiness the Pope—no offence to you Franciscans, but the truth is the truth—would hold to a treaty.

"The whelp is a rebel," he cried, when Agostino pled for leniency. "He shall have a fair trial with Robert di Lavena as judge—I can trust Robert di Lavena—but, by the Eyes of God," and he shook his fists in the air, stamping like a madman, "whatsoever Lavena says that shall I do, though it were to hang him by the heels.'

"But," said Agostino humbly, for Charles was no respecter of priests, "the Holy Father—Christendom——"

"When Christendom knocks at the gates of Naples," answered Charles grimly, "then will I listen to Christendom. As to Clement, Clement has not forgotten Viterbo and is as pithy as a proverb. Hear what he says: 'The life of Conradin is the death of Charles, the death of Conradin is the life of Charles, but it becomes not *me* to counsel death.' I think I can taste the marrow of that saying as well as you, Lord Cardinal. Conradin must stand trial, and all with him."



'Outside the door of the audience chamber Gemma Casalodi met Agostino as he retired discomfited, his failure in his face. One glance at his agitation and another at Charles raging to his brother, Robert of Flanders, at the further end of the room, told her as much as if he had excused himself for an hour.

"The King," she began.

"Will listen to nothing. He calls the boy a traitor, quotes Clement——"

'But with a fine sweep of scorn my lady interrupted in her turn.

"The King? The King?" she cried, careless who happened to be within hearing, though fortunately we three were alone. "My King is Conradin, as for that wolf——"

"Hush, hush, hush: would you destroy us all?"

"And it is I who have destroyed them all, but not wittingly, no, not wittingly. Uncle," and her soft voice hardened, "once you said I had done excellently well; God is my witness I never thought this would be the end. I did it for peace sake and thought no harm, but I did it and now give me my reward. I must see the King."

"Is it wise?" answered Agostino, turning round and looking doubtfully through the half-open door; "listen to his laugh, when Charles laughs like that men die."

"Oh," said she, flicking an open hand to right and left before her face, "did I not tell you that my King is elsewhere? I must see Conradin. It was I who sold him, I and Giovanni Frangipane after Tagliacozzo. He got the estates of Benevento, and shall I have nothing? Even Judas got thirty pieces of silver——"

"Hush, Gemma, no blasphemy."

"I mean none," she answered submissively, "only I will have my pay; I must see Conradin, I must see the King."

"Will you hush, girl? The guard——"

'On the hint I put in my word:

"Have no fear for me, your Eminence, I am of Siena. But the King is coming this way."

"The King!" replied she reproachfully, "the King! and yet you are of Siena."

"I take his pay," answered I, standing to a salute, and both moved away.

'To give the girl her will was no hard thing. Cruel though he was, it was no part of Charles' policy to seem cruel. The death



of Barbarossa's great-grandson must come by course of law, not by oppression: so, though Conradin was mewed up, there was no undue rigour in the mewing. An ostentatious freedom of intercourse was even allowed him, the unfailing presence of two of his gaoler's creatures securing his safe keeping. Most likely Agostino jingled a handful of golden keys, for the same day the door opened, and through Pier Pigli, another of Provenzano's men, I learned what passed.

'The three princes had a room in common, ill-lit as became a prison-house, and it chanced that King Conradin was near the entrance when the door opened. At the sound he turned and, seeing Gemma Casalodi, his arms went out as if to catch her to himself, then, remembering how many eyes were watching, he let them slip to his sides and bowed crying:

"When angels come then heaven is not far off; welcome, lady, most welcome."

"No angel, my King," she answered sorrowfully, "no angel, only a sinful woman: and I fear, oh I fear, I fear, heaven is indeed very near thee."

'For a second Conradin winced and a shadow darkened his face, but only for a second.

"At least," he said, rallying, a little smile struggling bravely to his eyes, "I thank Anjou for sending so gentle a messenger."

"It is not on his part, but on my own, that I am here," answered Gemma. "I have come to make confession."

"If I were as I was in Siena," replied Conradin, "then is there one confession of which I would gladly confess thee, but being here and what I am——"

"It is my doing thou art here, my doing thou art what thou art," she cried, a wail breaking her voice, "but now and here, as always, thou art my King."

'They had remained a pace or two apart, but now, as if by common consent of nature, their hands met and down she went upon her knees, as she had done in Salvani's lodging.

"My doing, my King, and though thou mayest forgive me, yet can I never forgive myself."

"Thy doing, sweet?" Truly he was a precocious boy, though sorrow and necessities often cause an early ripening. "How is it thy doing?"

"I talked of the greatness that should be, of the waiting for

this, the delay for that, and while you listened Charles gathered his strength; but indeed, indeed, the plot was not mine, and through it all they promised me you would go, not safe alone, but free."

"And now?"

'She looked aside, glancing pitifully at Agostino in the background, but he gave neither sign nor help. As to Frederic the Austrian and Henry of Castile, they talked at the further end of the room as if alone in the world.

"And now?" repeated Conradin, laying a hand about her neck as he had never dared before, "what now?"

"Now Charles swears the rebels must stand trial before Lavena."

'Up from the ruffled brown hair from which the fold of lace, the only headgear she wore, was pushed aside, Conradin looked blankly round. He had never dreamed that Anjou would dare to push his advantage so inexorably far. Then above his pride the boy's heart of him spoke out:

"A rebel? I, the last Hohenstaufen a rebel, and before Lavena? It is murder. Ah! mother, mother, I fear thou wilt never cease to weep for this day's sorrow."

'Back to the brown head, shaken with sobs, his gaze wandered. Laying both hands upon it he stooped, and what more passed between is known only to themselves and God. But this much is certain, neither then nor after did the boy add to her burden of grief by a reproach.'

With more feeling than might have been looked for in one who in so world-worn a life had played many parts, not always of the nicest honour, Adamo paused, his face troubled, the little crowsfeet at his eyes puckered into yet deeper creases.

'Even you, Messires Franciscans, will hardly wonder if in those days we did not dearly love the Whites. That we were not always angels I grant, but it would take many devils to level the balance with Charles of Anjou in the other side of the scales.

'At the mockery of a trial I was not present. Conradin and the rest refused to plead, the indignation of the boy bursting out in stormy words:

"Your master, at least, is my equal, and who are you, Di Lavena, his slave and tool, to be my judge? A rebel? I was born Prince of Naples, and the world knows it. The hand that

holds thee on thy forsworn judgment seat is the hand that has thrust me from my rightful place, and that the world knows also. Plead before thee, thou barrator? Kings plead before none lower than their God, to whom alone they answer."

'But if Conradin would not plead, Suzaria, the greatest jurist of the age, spoke for him, and might as well have spoken to the March wind tearing at the shutters there. By the hour he argued, proved, refuted, until Di Lavena could no longer bear the frittering of his thin pretences to such tatters and roared him down.

"What need is there for so much talk?" he thundered, shaking his fist furiously at Suzaria; "this Conradin was beyond the Alps and now is here. Did he come in peace or in war? He claims to be born a citizen of the State, and yet is in arms against the State. Such a citizen is a rebel and to be a rebel damns him."

'And yet not even Lavena himself dared fling a blunt "Death" in the face of the men he was suborned to murder.

"We will consider the case," said he, with a fine assumption of impartiality, "and having nicely weighed the proved facts we shall deliver judgment."

'Deliver judgment!' repeated Adamo scornfully, leaning forward as he spoke and smiting the dying faggots with the huge tongs used for shifting the cooking pots on the chain that swung across the open hearth, smiting them till the sparks rose crackling up the black vault of the chimney, 'deliver the spawn of hell!'

'And yet,' said the friar in the corner, 'you took his master's pay?'

'And yet,' echoed Giro Adamo sourly, 'I took his master's pay. That was because a man is fool enough at times to love his body better than his soul. But because I took his master's pay I was one of the watch the day Robert of Bari came thundering at the door like the crack of doom he was, the Captain of the guard with him, and, more significant still, Conradin's confessor. The lad was at chess with Frederic of Austria when the three entered, and after the first sidelong glance at the interruption he went back to the play unmoved.

"My game in three moves," said he, lifting a piece between his thumb and finger.

'But if he were really as careless as he seemed, so was not

Frederic. At the sight of the parchment in Robert's hand he pushed back his stool.

"This is not play but earnest, and I fear the end is nearer than you think."

"I also think, but I do not fear," returned Conradin. Then to Robert of Bari, "Well, sir, what is your business?"

"That was soon told, and in whatever wealth of learned Latinity the shameful sentence was wrapped up its kernel was one word, and that was Death. Up to his feet started Conradin.

"I am above his judgment, and he knows it. But I make no complaint, nor, where justice is denied, do I look for mercy. Is it a crime in a prince to seek the throne of his fathers? But what of these, my faithful companions? If there is no pardon for me, at least spare them?"

'But Bari shook his head.

"They are all here," said he, with a touch of his finger nail on the parchment, "all except the Prince of Costilo."

"Thank God for one omission," replied the King. "Frederic, Frederic, my heart is sore that I have drawn this net about you. Leave us, Messires, I beg of you, that we may make our peace with one another and with God."

'Pass on now to that last scene of all, and when I have ended tell me which of the two, Provenzano Salvani or Conradin of Hohenstaufen had the nobler courage in him: the one a man's full age and dying sword in hand, the other a half-blown boy, an age of all others when the lust for life is apt to turn coward—listen now.

'The Castello dell' Ovo stands, as you know, on a small island pushed out into the sea some forty or fifty yards from the shore. A causeway with a drawbridge joins the two. Along this we marched, the priests in front chanting a *Miserere*, those behind muttering prayers for the dying. The six prisoners walked between, for, with the King and Frederic, the Lancias and two Pisans of the house of Donaticcio were also to die—a procession that might have made devils merciful, though it stirred no pity in Charles of Anjou.

'But midway along the causeway Conradin halted, and out from the packed line of watchers Gemma Casalodi threw herself at his feet, her face awash with tears.

"Forgive me, my King," she cried, sobbing, "forgive me, forgive me, for I knew not what I did."

'Stooping, Conradin lifted her, and before them all kissed her

on the mouth for the first and last time, the poor mouth that quivered so she hardly knew his lips touched her.

"As God for Christ's sake will forgive me," he answered. "Take her, Lord Cardinal, and may the power of God give her back the peace the craft of man has taken from her. March on in front!" Nor did he say another farewell or look behind.

'On by the right crept the procession, keeping to the line of the coast and with the hill of Santa Lucia on the left; on through the long mile to where the scaffold stood hard by the Church of Santa Maria, near the Carmine gate.

"When death is in front kings should show the way," said Conradin, and climbed the ladder first.

'In my duty I was lined up as one of the inner guard surrounding the scaffold, and as he looked about him, unafraid, his eye caught mine.

"Come to me," said he, beckoning, and stripping off his gloves as he spoke, "Thou art one of Salvani's men, I think? I owe thee no grudge for the change of service: plain men may do that which kings cannot with honour." Stooping he handed me the glove with his left hand, first kissing it. "Give that to the lady Gemma Casalodi: nothing more shall touch my lips this side of Paradise." Then, stepping back, he looked round the packed throng, the right-hand glove raised above his head.

"Hear all men," he cried, nor was there a shake in his voice. "In the face of God and the people I name my kinsman Peter of Arragon heir to my throne of Naples. May the right conquer!" and dashed the glove down at the feet of Anjou's deputy.

"No, no, no," broke in the priest who stood by his side, "call not for war, my lord, but rather pray the God of peace to take you to His keeping."

"Why, so He will," replied Conradin, flinging back his collar and kneeling as he spoke, his arms outstretched before him. "I have not waited until now to make my peace with Him. Farewell, Frederic my brother, farewell Di Lancia. *Domine JESU, suscipe spiritum meum*; now strike, fellow."

'And there was an end to the Hohenstaufens.

'But Gemma Casalodi never received her token. She was already dead when Agostino bore her into the Castle after the procession passed on. Conradin's prayer for her had met with a swift answer.'

HAMILTON DRUMMOND.

*THE QUEEN'S BROOCH: A POSTSCRIPT.*

At the time of the Diamond Jubilee there appeared in the CORNHILL MAGAZINE some personal reminiscences of Queen Victoria's childhood and marriage by Lady Jane Ellice, who, until the other day, was the last survivor of Her Majesty's twelve bridesmaids.

Trifling detail is laughed at as a feminine foible, yet the writer's minute description of the Queen's gift to her bridesmaids led to the following pleasant result, and I greatly hoped that her more graceful pen could have added this little sequel six years ago.

In that same summer there came to visit us a charming old lady whom I am privileged to call my friend. When she came down to dinner I could not help remarking the large curious brooch she wore—more curious perhaps than beautiful for personal adornment—suggestive indeed of some sort of Imperial Order. A spread eagle of solid beaten gold, the wings studded with turquoises, rubies for eyes, each claw holding a pearl; also, I remember, small diamonds about the head or neck—or was it one only, in the beak? The under side of the brooch was scratched as if some lettering had been effaced.

'Ah! I wanted you to notice it,' said my friend, 'that is why I put it on, and very likely I may never wear it again. Thereby hangs a tale;' handing me the current number of CORNHILL. 'A friend gave me this brooch forty years ago; it seemed even then to have a history, but the jeweller could only say that he believed it had belonged "to a lady at Court." However, an article in this magazine offers a clue, for Lady Jane Ellice gives an exact description of my brooch, and somehow I perceive a tone of pensive regret which makes me think she no longer has her Queen's gift. Indeed, I feel sure that it is no longer mine, and I have already written to her about it.'

During dinner it may be imagined that my appetite and my curiosity had a struggle. As soon as we returned to the drawing-room I eagerly read the article headed, 'Some Memories of the Queen's Childhood and Marriage;' it is to be found in the June

number of 1897, should anyone care to read more than the following extract:—

I cannot recall what passages or apartments we (the bridesmaids) passed through after the marriage ceremony, but we finally found ourselves in a room with the Queen and Prince, with no guests or relatives present. They were standing by a table, when an attendant brought in what looked like a plain coloured baize or cloth bag, and gave it to the Queen, who drew from it, one at a time, a little dark-blue velvet case, giving one to each of us. Then she and the Prince passed out at a side door, and we saw them no more. The cases contained brooches in the form of a spread eagle studded with turquoises, with ruby eyes, and holding a pearl in each claw. The royal initials and the date were engraven at the back. We afterwards received permission to wear them in a white rosette on our shoulder as a kind of bridesmaids' order. But the use of this privilege gradually died out.

When my friend left us, her parting words were, 'There is sure to be a letter awaiting me at home, and you shall hear soon, but I foresee my brooch must go.' Sure enough, in two days came her note enclosing an interesting letter from Lady Jane which related that about forty years ago, in driving through London, her trunks were stolen from the roof of a cab, the Queen's brooch and other trinkets thus being lost. No trace was ever found, and in those days theft would be more difficult to follow up. Beyond expressing her great interest and her surprise at the coincidence of date, Lady Jane, needless to say, made no suggestion, and there the matter might have ended. But my friend did not close her eyes that night until she had decided that Lady Jane Ellice had a moral right to the treasure, which next day was carefully packed and sent off. My friend regarded the action as one of simple restitution. I know she is glad that Lady Jane accepted the obligation without attempting any acknowledgment other than simple thanks.

I think that the inheritor of the restored brooch must feel it has a treble value, for it represents history in a liberal sense. It is a memento of a great sovereign's life, of one who took part in the happiest event of that life, and, not least, of a third English gentlewoman whose delicate sense of honour and loyalty to her Queen prompted her own queen-like and graceful act of restoration.

I believe that eventually a connection of my friend, still holding an honourable place near the Throne, having heard the story, took an opportunity to tell it to Her late Majesty, who was deeply interested. That the Queen should know was the only recompense my friend would have chosen, and she is well pleased.

SARAH SISSON.



*CHATEAUBRIAND AND HIS ENGLISH  
NEIGHBOURS.*

FOR nearly three-quarters of a century the memoirs of a great literary Frenchman have been dead to the average English reader. It is true that the task of translation was one not lightly to be undertaken, for in Chateaubriand the artist predominates: his surpassing merit lies in his diction. But within the last eighteen months his thoughts have been dressed in an English garb, and whatever of that subtle originality which we call style it has been possible to capture from a foreign language and reproduce in our own has been done—and notably well done—by Mr. Teixeira de Mattos.

The general tone of the memoirs is pessimistic and depressing. 'Life does not suit me' (it is thus our author prefaces his volume); 'death will perhaps become me better.' The place in which he first saw the light is 'the room in which my mother inflicted life on me,' and his godfather is 'the unfortunate brother who gave me a name which I have nearly always dragged through misfortune.' His favourite quotations are the most sombre utterances of the patriarch Job. Looking upon his life as one long misery, he wishes it would come to an end. His memoirs are dated 'from beyond the grave.'

In such sentiments as these it is not easy to recognize the man who sprang into fame at a bound with one of the most notable literary successes of the nineteenth century—who, whatever the nature of the conflict raging in his own mind, attained distinction and outward prosperity, and (in spite of his repinings for death) reached a green old age. Living, his name—to quote his own description—'flew from pole to pole': dead, a cross alone was necessary to mark the tomb of a famous son of France. To have known Burke a broken-hearted father, and Pitt in the heyday of his great career; to have listened to Sheridan, Fox, and fenced with Canning, Londonderry, and Wellington; to have been the intimate of Mesdames de Staël, Récamier, and George Sand; the honoured guest of Washington in the New and of George IV. in



the Old World; the friend and foe of Napoleon; confidant of a Pope; trusted counsellor of Louis XVIII. and Charles X.; ambassador to Berlin, London, Rome; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Peer of France; surely these are recollections which must have lightened up the darkened chambers of his memory with a sunset glow of splendour.

It cannot be denied that *vanitas vanitatum* is often the judgment which attends upon the pomps and gauds of the world, nor must it be forgotten that the writer of the memoirs had lived in tragic times, had tasted the bitterness of poverty and bodily suffering, had known the fickleness as well as the favour of princes. Nevertheless the explanation of the vein of melancholy which runs through his writings seems to lie more especially in his temperament and the associations of his youth. He is essentially the sentimentalist and man of feeling who reckons his sensibilities amongst the number of his luxuries and indulges freely in them. Nor is he without suspicion of the *poseur*.

His passport as a refugee in England prosaically describes him as a French officer in the emigrant army; five feet four inches high, thin shape, brown hair and whiskers; but the portrait which faces the first volume, no less than the spirit of his writings, leads us to look for the real Chateaubriand in one of the most delightful of his own descriptions. Speaking of the English man of fashion at the end of the eighteenth century he says:

The duty of a man of fashion was at the first glance to present an unhappy and ailing figure; he was expected to have something neglected about his person; long nails; beard worn neither full nor shaved, but seeming to have sprouted at a given moment by surprise, through forgetfulness and the preoccupations of despair; a waving lock of hair; a profound, sublime, wandering, and fatal glance; lips contracted in scorn of the human race; a heart bored, Byronic, drowned in the disgust and mystery of existence.

Shorn of some humorous exaggerations, it is here the author of 'René' stands confessed. No compliment so touches his heart as that which discerns beneath his outward well-being the vulture preying upon his vitals. In Rome at one of his receptions as ambassador, an unknown Englishwoman draws near to tell him he is unhappy, then mysteriously retires. A sprightly girl in Dublin rallies him on his gloomy mien—'You carry your heart in a sling.' Each of these episodes is recorded with something more than satisfaction, and forms the text for a jeremiad.

He belonged to a peculiar people. Eccentricity ran in his

family, from his uncle 'the high-born Rabelais, persistently refusing preferment'—an abbé, stout and red-faced, with ill-curled wig and torn cassock with the ends tucked into his pocket—to his aunt, Madame Bédée, who always had a kind of snarling hound lying in her lap, and was followed by a tame boar which filled the house with its grunts.

Born on the rock of St. Malo, he was a true Breton, and the roaring of the equinoctial winds and waves around him on the day of his birth had more than an imported meaning for his life. Combours was the home of his boyhood, a place by no means provocative of gaiety of spirit. The huge château 'where a hundred knights, their squires and varlets, and King Dagobert's chargers and packs might almost have gone unnoticed,' sheltered only his father, mother, sister and himself with a few retainers. No visitors passed through its gates, an intolerable dullness brooded over it. Young, the English traveller, makes the following uncomplimentary reference to it:

To Combours the country has a savage aspect . . . the people almost as wild as their country, and their town of Combours one of the most brutal, filthy places that can be seen . . . yet here is a château and inhabited: who is this M. de Chateaubriand, the owner, that has nerves strung for a residence among such filth and poverty?

The owner in question was a soured and disappointed man, of whom this picture was drawn by his son:

His general condition was one of deep sadness, which increased with age, and of a silence from which he issued only in fits of anger. Harsh with his dependents at Combours, taciturn, despotic, and threatening at home, the feeling which the sight of him inspired was one of fear.

In this atmosphere of gloom and parental severity, the natural melancholy of the boy deepened upon him, finding at last a terrible expression in an act of attempted suicide.

In those days the cadets of aristocratic Breton families looked as a matter of course to a career on shipboard, and Chateaubriand was recalled from his solitary wanderings and morbid imaginings to enter a naval school at Brest. Enthusiastic at first, his mind gradually faded away from thoughts of the sea; suddenly, without warning, he presented himself at home to inflict the problem of another suitable profession upon the perplexed household. His mother ardently desired to see him a priest, but a sense of personal unworthiness led him to accept rather a commission in the regiment of Navarre. As a soldier it was his lot, under cir-

circumstances highly characteristic of France before the Revolution, to become in some sense an ecclesiastic as well. Dressed in full uniform and wearing his sword, he tells us how he went down on his knees before the Bishop of St. Malo, how that prelate cut two or three hairs from the crown of his head, calling this the tonsure, and bestowed upon him a formal certificate qualifying him—not for any spiritual ministrations, but for an income of two hundred thousand livres as a member of the Order of Malta. He admits that this was by way of being an abuse, but inquires—with a *naïveté* unexpected in an eminent defender of the Faith and Roman apologist—if it were not better that a kind of military benefice should be attached to the sword of a warrior than to the cloak of an *abbé* who would have dissipated this income on the pavements of Paris.

An elder brother who had opened the way for him into the army now endeavoured to push his fortunes at Court. But here he was to distinguish himself only by shyness and maladroitness adventures. Summoned to attend the King (Louis XVI.) on a hunting expedition, his mare—ironically named *La Heureuse*—carried him with great determination into the places he was most anxious to avoid. Scattering everything in his course, he found himself, to his dismay, first in at the death, an unpardonable offence against the monarch whose diary at the time when his crown and life were trembling in the balance bore the record 'blank day' because there had been no hunting. After this exploit the young officer retired as incontinently from Court as he had done from the Naval College at Brest.

Then came the dark days of the Revolution, his emigration to Canada, and his campaign with the army of the Princes, after the flight and death of its unhappy King. In 1793 he determined to 'bid a long farewell to his native land,' and crossed to England, where our interest in him more especially commences.

He had left behind him a country running with blood; monarchy in ruins; his nearest relatives martyred, or standing under the shadow of the guillotine; the family fortunes broken; he had put his foot on the shores of liberty, peace, and a stable government, yet London, his first refuge, was to be to him only the City of Dreadful Night. Here he was to eat the bread of sorrow in a strange land, and in such a state of destitution that his life in these early days of exile reads like the history of a Grub Street hack. He dwelt in an attic which overlooked a

cemetery, where, night after night, he heard the watchman's rattle proclaiming the proximity of body-snatchers. His bed consisted of a mattress and blanket; he had no sheets; when it was cold he placed his coat and a chair above him. So weak was he that he could not make his own bed. Hunger was a familiar experience: for days he went without food, sucking pieces of linen soaked in water, chewing grass or paper. Long after, when as the Minister of France he returns from a rout to his embassy 'passing by the light of candles between two rows of lacqueys, ending in half a dozen respectful secretaries,' he recalls with a shudder the homecomings of his emigrant days when he climbed high up the dark, rickety staircase only to be received by a friend as poor and miserable as himself. Ill-health—a legacy from the wars—added its bitterness to his cup. Fashionable doctors, besieged by patients, assured him that he would die of his malady—and charged him a guinea for the prediction. Even the kindly physician known to the readers of Thackeray as Dr. Goodenough gave him advice without fee but without encouragement. He was bidden to prepare for the worst.

At last kindlier days dawned for him. The money he was able to make by translations and hack work was supplemented by a generous contribution from his family; his health improved; he was invited to Beccles by a Society of Antiquaries to undertake the task of deciphering some French twelfth-century MSS. from the Camden Collection.

In Suffolk occurred the romance of his life. One English woman (albeit of low degree) already occupied a place in his esteem. As he lay on the quay at Guernsey, apparently dying, the wife of an English pilot had compassion on him, and nursed him in a fisherman's cottage to which she had him carried, till he gained strength enough to resume his journey to his friends in Jersey. Of her he says 'I owe her my life: my fair-haired and comely guardian who resembled a figure in the Old English prints.' Fortune was now to bring him under the influence of another of her nation and sex. Falling from his horse near Bungay in Suffolk, he was taken to the house of a clergyman named Ives. Pressed to extend his stay, and passing much of his time in the society of Charlotte, the only daughter, the young Frenchman discovered when too late that Love had taken possession of his soul. He determined to leave at once. But his secret was no longer confined to his own breast. On the evening of the

day announced for his departure, Mrs. Ives called him aside to tell him he had won the affections of her child.

'Sir,' she said, 'Mr. Ives and I have consulted together; you suit us in every respect: we believe you will make our daughter happy. You no longer possess a country; you have lost your relations; your property is sold; what is there to take you back to France? Until you inherit what we have, you will live with us.' Of all the sorrows I had undergone, this was the sorest and greatest. I threw myself at Mrs. Ives' feet. I covered her hand with my kisses and tears. She thought I was weeping with happiness; she stretched out her hand to pull the bell-rope: she called her husband and daughter. 'Stop,' I cried. 'I am a married man!'

So he was. In 1792 he had bestowed his name upon a woman he hardly knew by sight. Her merit lay in her dot of six hundred thousand francs. Meditating in his memoirs on this *mariage de convenance*, avowedly contracted to provide him with an income, he concludes that, on the whole, it was well for him to be yoked to a worthy woman who should keep him straight, and prove a sobering influence in his career. 'If I had not married, would not my weakness have made me the prey of some designing creature? Should I not have squandered and polluted my days like Lord Byron?'

But when his thoughts turn to the young girl of nineteen he met among the meadows of vernal England, there is a flame in his words that shows he lived and moved for once in the free air of love. When, more than a quarter of a century later, Vicomte de Chateaubriand, Ambassador of France, gave audience in his study to a lady dressed in mourning, and accompanied by two handsome boys, he was speechless when he recognised in Lady Sutton, widow of the Admiral of that name, the Charlotte Ives of his early manhood. 'I felt how deeply I loved her by what I was now experiencing.'

The England in which the young refugee found himself was the England whose social life is disclosed to us in the pages of Washington Irving. In those days there was no compromise between the upper and the lower classes, between the gentry and those who worked for a wage. The detested bourgeoisie of France had no counterpart in Albion. Prominent in the picture of society which Chateaubriand has drawn is the squire, who spends his days on his estate among his own people, and disdains the fashionable life of town. He is sturdy and independent and coarse. He hunts for five months in the year; keeps wassail at Christmas; looks askance at Whiggery; distrusts Pitt; has a strong aversion from

any war which sends up the price of port ; goes to bed in his boots every night. If he represents a rotten borough, he takes to Parliament with him a fresh, breezy atmosphere, very refreshing in that venal place ; he opposes, if needs be, the strongest Ministry, and holds on like a bull-dog to the old-fashioned ideas of freedom, law, and property. 'He is firmly convinced that the glory of Britannia will never fade so long as they sing "God save the King," maintain the pocket boroughs, keep the game laws in vigour.'

Of the life of the upper classes Chateaubriand saw but little, and that of the outside. As he paced the London streets, he was aware of grand ladies on their way to Court, attired in the fashions familiar to us in the cartoons of Gilray and Rowlandson. They lay back in sedan chairs, their immense petticoats projecting through the door of the chair like altar-hangings. They looked like Madonnas or Pagodas. In Hyde Park he had often beheld 'the greatest sailor since the world began,' of whom he has left only a caustic description, as folding his victories in Lady Hamilton's shawl at Naples, while the lezzaroni tossed human heads from hand to hand. At Slough he saw Herschel with his prodigiously learned sister, and the wonder of those days, the forty-foot telescope, which had discovered new planets swimming into its ken. In his later acquaintance with England he has occasion to bewail the disappearance of the picturesque, but at the end of the eighteenth century Damon and Cynthia are still to be found in the London parks and gardens, while 'along the same pavements where one sees now dirty faces and men in surtouts passed little girls in white cloaks, with straw hats fastened under the chin with a ribbon, a basket on their arm containing fruit or a book : all kept their eyes lowered, all blushed when one looked at them.' Even the seamen belong to heroic times, for he assures us that it is by no means unusual to find sailors, born on ship-board, who, from infancy to old age, have never set foot on dry land.

The venerable and pathetic figure of George III. was not unknown to him. Once he witnessed the arrival, 'in a dowdy carriage,' of that monarch from Windsor, where he had been hobnobbing with his brother farmers, discussing turnips, and drinking out of the same pewter. Later, he saw in Windsor Castle 'the King, white-haired and blind, wandering like Lear through his palace, groping with his hands along the walls of his

apartment. He sat down to a piano, of which he knew the position, and played some portions of a sonata of Handel: a fine ending for old England!

George's great minister, Pitt, with his nose in the air, his sad and mocking look, his supercilious carriage, has a profound interest for the man who was one day to move his own Senate against that political predominance which Pitt had largely secured. He reckons him 'lord of the Kings of Europe, as five or six city merchants are the masters of India,' bearing witness at the same time to the nobility of his patriotism and the purity of his public life.

'In his own affairs,' he says, 'the great financier maintained no order: had no regular hours for his meals or sleep: Over head and ears in debt, he paid nobody. Badly dressed, with no pleasures, no passions, greedy only for power, he scorned honours, and refused to be more than plain Mr. Pitt.'

Parliament was a favourite resort of the coming diplomatist and senator. There he listened to the cold utterance and monotonous intonation of Pitt, yielding, like others, to the fascination of his lucidity and logic—to the wonderful flashes of eloquence which from time to time lighted up his sombre speech. There were giants in those days, Fox and Sheridan, and Wilberforce and Erskine, and Chateaubriand had heard them all. He had witnessed and formed his own opinion of the famous parting between Burke and Fox on the subject of the French Revolution. 'By declaring himself opposed to the French Revolution he [Burke] dragged his country into the long road of hostilities which ended in the plains of Waterloo.' He had been an amused spectator of the vagaries of Lord Holland, spinning round, as upon a pivot, until he was facing the walls to which his remarks were apparently addressed. On the whole, the Frenchman was favourably impressed with the English House of Commons, and contrasted the natural tone and unaffected manners of its members with the fiery assembly of his own land. 'We, always placed upon a stage, hold forth and gesticulate like a solemn puppet show.'

A good English scholar from his youth—a youth nourished on the wild epics of Ossian—he now became fully conversant with the literature of his adopted country. Shakespeare he holds in high regard, ranking him amongst the number of those who have supplied the seed thoughts of mankind. He is one of the parent geniuses who seem to have brought forth and suckled all the



others; his influence is seen in the romantic poetry of Byron and the prose romances of Walter Scott. He indulges in a quaint speculation concerning a physical disability of the dramatist, and seems to be of opinion that the elder English poet was as lame as the younger one.

Dumas, it will be remembered, follows in the train of the author of the memoirs, and writes with enthusiasm:

I came to recognise that in the world of the theatre everything emanates from Shakespeare as in the physical world all emanates from the sun. . . . The work of this one man contains as many types as the rest put together: he is the one who has created most; next after God.

The rank and file of English writers Chateaubriand dismisses with few words, but for the author of the 'Decline and Fall' he has a scathing sentence: 'a philosopher during his lifetime, he became a Christian on his death-bed; and in that capacity was convicted of being a sorry individual.'

In the year 1800 the exile bade adieu to the land which had sheltered him for eight long years, and returned to his own people and country. His mind, accustomed to the freedom and absence of officialism in England, was quick to perceive at Calais the change of *régime*. No sooner does his boat come to an anchor than gendarmes and custom-house officers leap aboard and take possession. 'In France a man is always suspected, and the first thing we see in our business as well as in our amusements is a cocked hat or a bayonet.'

Under Napoleon he became minister to the Valais Republic, but the execution of the Duc d'Enghien so revolted him that he retired from his office, and ranked himself thereafter amongst the opponents of the First Consul. The fall of Buonaparte opened once again a political career of which Chateaubriand had always been ardently desirous, and by Louis XVIII., whose cause he had consistently maintained, he was despatched to England in 1822 as French Ambassador.

The contrast between his first and second visit we have already noticed. The people still live as grossly as ever: at Dover, where he is fêted, the bill of fare, consisting of huge fishes and enormous pieces of beef, destroys rather than assists his appetite. Duelling is not yet out of fashion; soon after his arrival the Dukes of Buckingham and Bedford held pistols to each other's heads, at the bottom of a pit in Hyde Park. During the intervening years the middle class has evolved itself: 'Everything has



become machinery in the manufacturing professions, folly in the privileged classes.' The man of fashion, no longer Byronic and misanthropic,

must have a conquering, thoughtless, insolent air; he must attend to his dress and wear moustaches, or a beard cut round like Queen Elizabeth's ruff or the radiant disc of the sun; reveals the lofty independence of his character by keeping his hat on his head, by lolling on the sofa, stretching out his boots before the noses of the ladies seated in admiration in chairs before him; he rides with a cane which he carries like a wax taper. A few Radical dandies, those most advanced towards the future, possess a pipe.

He sums up his impression of society in the well-known aphorism 'All the English are mad by nature or by fashion.'

As Ambassador he meets every one worth knowing. At Lord Lansdowne's he is introduced by George IV. to a severe-looking lady of patriarchal age, attired in crape, and resembling a queen who had abdicated her throne. 'She greeted me in a solemn voice, with three mangled sentences from the "Genius of Christianity," and then said to me with no less solemnity "I am Mrs. Siddons." If she had said to me "I am Lady Macbeth," I should have believed her.' At a rout he encounters the Duchess of Devonshire whose charms have been perpetuated on the canvas of Gainsborough. He admits the mature beauty of the lady of forty-seven, but adds the curious information that she had lost one eye, a defect which she concealed behind a lock of her hair.

From time to time he meets the Duke of Wellington, whom he regards with the strong disfavour of a patriotic Frenchman. His references to him are to the man of gallantry, or to the fortuitous soldier whose victories are due less to merit than to a lucky chance. 'General,' he says, 'you did not defeat Napoleon at Waterloo; you only forced the last link of a destiny already shattered.' In saying this he probably expressed the feeling of all France.

Dumas, philosophising in late years upon the event of Waterloo, also attributes the French overthrow to Destiny, or Providence embodied in the forms of Wellington and Blücher. With this convenient explanation of all things, if it afford a salve to wounded patriotism, we need not quarrel.

In Chateaubriand's opinion it is not only necessary to rob Wellington of the crown of his victory, but to attribute to him incompetence as a leader. The credit of Napoleon's defeat belongs to Blücher: Wellington had been surprised by his great

antagonist and compelled to accept a detestable strategic position where he remained trembling until relieved by the advancing Prussians. The truth is Wellington was so inseparably connected with the humiliation of France that Chateaubriand could not judge him dispassionately. He complains that 'an Irish Protestant, an English general unacquainted with our manners and history, was charged to shape our destinies'; this in view of the part which Wellington played in the adjustment of France's affairs after Buonaparte's retirement to Elba. To the legitimist soul of Chateaubriand the man who could say 'That's a trifle' of Fouché's regicide was incapable of understanding or directing the high destiny of Fouché's country.

It is not usual for Englishmen to think of the 'good, grey head' as associated with affairs of gallantry: the memoirs, not unwillingly, give us a glimpse into those lighter moments of Wellington. They represent him as striving to attract a glance from Juliet—the beautiful Madame Récamier—into whose drawing-room he strode after Waterloo with the triumphant words, 'I have beaten him soundly.'

'Madame,' begins his letter, 'I confess I do not much regret that business will prevent me from calling upon you after dinner, because every time I see you I leave you more impressed with your charms, and less disposed to give my attention to politics. I will call upon you to-morrow in case you should be in, and in spite of the effect which these dangerous visits will produce on your most faithful servant, W.'

That the Duke had his own views of the attractions of French blue-stockings is evident from a letter to Lady Burghersh dated Paris, 1817:

I am on proper terms with the Staël—that is, she is confoundedly afraid of me. She told a person, who repeated it to me, that she had done everything in her power *pour m'intéresser à elle* (what does she suppose we are made of?) but she found I had no *cœur pour l'amour*!

The memoirs' last reference to Wellington finds him still pursuing his career as a man of affairs. At a ball at Almack's, 'the meeting-place of dandies old and young, amongst the old shone the Victor of Waterloo, who aired his glory like a snare for women stretched across the quadrilles.'

Parliament revisited gives occasion to melancholy reflections upon its lost glories. Canning is an eloquent speaker rather than an able politician; a man of letters rather than a statesman. He is to be remembered by the 'Needy Knife-grinder,' not by

diplomacy. Peel receives but a passing mention; Lord Bathurst is noticeable only for good manners based on the French tradition. Liverpool is a worthy personage with a reputation for piety; the description of him is notable:

At the time when I knew him, he had almost reached the Puritan illumination. He lived alone with an old sister some miles out of London. He spoke little: his countenance was melancholy; he often bent an ear and seemed to be listening to something sad: one would have said that he was hearing his years fall, like the drops of a winter's rain upon the pavement. For the rest he had no passions, and he lived according to God.

Londonderry, the Foreign Minister of his day, is 'a man of doubtful frankness, who never says what he means.' In spite of his Celtic birth (displaying itself on occasions in Irish eloquence and Irish bulls) he is of a demeanour so impassive that 'he would not have budged if some one had caught him on the ear with a sausage.' His tragic end is described in full, and derision is poured upon the popular notion that he destroyed himself through political despair. His suicide was preceded by mental aberration. George IV. told Chateaubriand that whilst reading a MS. he noticed that his Minister was not listening to him, and that his eyes were rolling wildly about the room. Questioned on the cause of his discomposure, the Marquis replied, 'It is that insufferable John, sir, who is at the door; he will not go away though I am always telling him.' The King folded up his paper and said, 'You are ill, my Lord; go home and get yourself bled.'

Chateaubriand had returned to England to find that the writings of Scott and Byron were in vogue; his diary is full of references to them. The Scottish novelist he regards as the unquestioned founder of the recent school of historical romance, even as the poetry of the nineteenth century was to receive its first and greatest expression from the lips of Byron.

But he has little to say of the Wizard of the North in comparison with Byron, whose fortunes and fate appeal so strongly to him. Indeed, is not the English poet a descendant and follower of his own? Proclaiming him an immortal singer, the greatest poet that England has produced since Milton, he does not hesitate to affirm that Byron had 'René' in view when he wrote 'Childe Harold,' 'The Giaour,' and 'Conrad,' and that it was that character which inspired his genius. In the fame of Byron, he sees a menace to his own: 'one wishes to keep the sceptre, fears to share it.' In the lives of the two poets he

detects coincidences. Both were unhappy in their childhood, both were peers (and, he might have added, failures in the House of Peers), both loved the Orient and travelled widely in it, both nourished their youth on the Bible and on Ossian. Whilst the one was at Harrow, the other was an exile in the great city ten miles away; under the elm in Harrow churchyard each had dreamed of his hero; Byron sang of the heaths of Scotland and its seaside, Chateaubriand of the marshes of Brittany and the sea. Of fame the English poet is assured:

Lord Byron will live, whether a child of his century he gave utterance, like myself and like Goethe, to its passions and misfortunes, or whether my circumnavigation and the lantern of my Gallic bark showed the vessel of Albion the track across unexplored waters.

But Byron's fame even in his own day is passing away, and Chateaubriand reproaches England with her inability to understand the poet whose cry is so deep and so sad. He predicts that France will raise up altars to the genius of his age 'when his own country shall have disowned him or suffered his memory to lapse.'

Of Byron as a man he holds a contemptuous opinion as vain, misanthropic, and profligate. In Geneva an old boatman told him how Byron set sail in the teeth of a tempest, and leaped from the deck of his felucca into the waves and swam through the gale to the Castle of Chillon. 'I am not so eccentric,' adds Chateaubriand, lest coincidences be carried unduly far. Although he had never seen the writer of 'Don Juan' in the flesh, he saw in after years the two women who had been inseparably connected with his career. He draws an admirable distinction between them. 'Madame Guiccioli I met in Rome; Lady Byron in Paris. Frailty and virtue thus appealed to me: the former had probably too many realities; the latter too few dreams.'

Recalled to the Continent after a short tenure of office in London, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, and finally under Charles X. Ambassador to Rome.

His references to the English population of that place are of the most uncomplimentary nature. Britannia waving her trident North, South, East, West, asserting her supremacy in all quarters of the globe, had proved a sufficiently exasperating spectacle to the travelled Frenchman; in the Eternal City she is intolerable. When a Pope dies, and Christendom lies in hushed suspense, it is an English party of festive and over-dined people who elect His

Holiness's successor by a travesty of their own. It is a colony of Anglo-Saxons, living on the Piazza d'Espagna, who make great hubbubs, scornfully eyeing poor mortals from top to toe, and who go back to their brick-red kennel in London with hardly a glance at the Coliseum. It is these foreigners who jar insufferably upon the *convenances* of the Ambassador's reception :

What really clashes with the nature of the place is that multitude of vapid Englishmen and frivolous dandies who, holding each other linked by the arm, as the bats do by the wing, parade their eccentricity, their boredom, and their insolence at your receptions, and make themselves at home in your house as at an inn. This vagrant and swaggering Great Britain makes for your seats at public solemnities, and boxes with you to turn you out of them ; all day long it hastily swallows pictures and ruins, and in the evening it comes to swallow cakes and ices at your parties, feeling that it confers a great honour upon you for doing so. I do not know how an Ambassador can endure these unmannerly guests, and why he does not show them the door.

Even the memories of Milton—'the greatest Protestant poet of the seventeenth century and its most serious genius'—do not soften the asperities of the Ambassador's offended spirit. Fit precursor of the hordes of tourists who should inherit his Protestantism but not his gravity, Milton casts upon the Campagna 'a look as dry, as barren as his faith.' Rome, in a passage of fine imaginative force, regards him with displeasure : 'Leaning against the Cross, holding the Old and New Testaments in her hands, with the guilty generations driven from Eden behind her, and the redeemed generations descended from the Mount of Olives before her, she said to the heretic born of yesterday : "What do you want of your old mother ?"'

Lord Byron alone of all Englishmen has truly responded to the genius of the imperial city and her associations. 'When Napoleon's Eagle allowed Rome to escape from its claws, then Byron appeared at the crumbling walls of the Cæsars : he flung his distressed imagination over so many ruins like a mourning cloak. Rome, thou hadst a name, he gave thee another : that name will cling to thee ; he called thee—

The Niobe of nations—there she stands,  
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe.'

It was the fate of Chateaubriand, apparently, to experience the ingratitude of kings. Neglected by Louis XVIII., he was abruptly dismissed by Charles X. from his embassy, and henceforth retired from public affairs.

As a politician he had risen to no distinction, save as the author of the War of the Spanish Succession, an enterprise for which he claims the approval of Sir Robert Peel. The attempt on the part of some of his contemporaries to injure England by fomenting Irish discontent received no support from him, for he holds that Ireland has everything to lose by her separation from Great Britain. 'Ireland is only England's long boat; cut the painter, and the long boat, separated from the big ship, will go to wreck amid the waves.' But he is notable as opposing the tendency which ran in favour of a French alliance with England, a tendency which found expression in the Crimean War. In such a confederacy he foresaw nothing but loss to his own country; Russia is the real friend of France. Turkey, to him, is the incurably sick man whom it would be a good thing to cast into the Bosphorus. To discipline armies for the follower of the false prophet—to supply him with the resources of ships of war, steamboats, and railways—would be not to carry civilisation to the East but to bring barbarism to the West. Russia on the other hand represents Enlightenment and Christianity; thus her presence in Constantinople need not of necessity be a menace to the peace of Europe. By geographical position, by sympathy, by absence of commercial rivalry, by the prevalence of French manners and the French language amongst her upper classes, she is the natural ally of France. England must be held at arm's length: her history is against her: she has not respected the liberty of nations and things; she has veered round to despotism or democracy according to the wind which blew the ships of the City Merchants to her ports. What has England to offer in return for French support?—not territory, not large subsidies, not armies. If she is the Mistress of the Seas, France comes second as a great naval Power. In any concerted action taken against Russia by the two Powers, England would alone be the gainer, acquiring commercial privileges in which France with her smaller merchant fleet and trade would have little share.

In extreme old age, Chateaubriand died and was gathered to his fathers amidst the homage of his countrymen. But he was destined, two years before his passing, to set foot again upon the shores which he had visited as exile and ambassador. In response to the desire of the Comte de Chambord, the worn and broken old man journeyed to England to attest his loyalty to the legitimist succession he had so passionately advocated through a long life, and to kiss the hand of his uncrowned king. After a few

weeks' affectionate intercourse with his prince and the informal court that surrounded him, Chateaubriand crossed the Straits of Dover for the last time. As he watched with dim eyes the lessening cliffs of Albion, we may well believe that above the rancours of the statesman and patriot must have risen a feeling, kindly and grateful, to the land which had been to himself and so many of his distressed countrymen a haven of rest and security.

D. WALLACE DUTHIE.



## A RODEO IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

'RODEO' in Spanish means a cattle market; in its Californian significance the word is translated by the Century Dictionary 'round-up.' But the difference between the round-up of the Western plains and the rodeo of California is racial as well as lingual. The round-up is characteristic of the West and the Westerner. As a function—if it can with any propriety be termed such—it bears the same relation to the rodeo which coarse Irish frieze bears to brocade. Compare the two words *vaquero* and cowboy, and remember that the Sierras lie between them!

On a big rancho, such as the lovely Atascadero, preparations for the rodeo would begin some weeks before the event. Of the exact date Don Juan Bautista, the padrone, has duly notified all neighbours within a hundred miles. The señoritas have looked to the strings of their guitars and mandolines, prattling of the caballeros and their feats of horsemanship; the mayor-domo has strengthened the underpinning of the platform built for the ladies beneath a gigantic live oak: a sanctuary high out of the dust and overlooking the rodeo-ground. Hard by, a trout stream babbles and bubbles on its way to the Pacific; and in the cool shade of a clump of willows, upon canvas stretched tightly over damp earth, rough tables and benches furnish a leafy banqueting hall.

Upon the eve of the rodeo such guests as come from a distance arrive at the ranch-house: a long, low, 'adobe' building, red-tiled, and crowning a small hill. Some bring, each, half a dozen vaqueros and forty or fifty horses. Father Carlon, of the Santa Barbara Mission, is an honoured guest, the best of good fellows, a rare story-teller, and, of course, a *laudator temporis acti*. He will be sure to remind his old friend, a tall New Englander, who sailed round the Horn in the forties, that he—the miserable heretic!—was constrained to walk, draped in a sheet, carrying a couple of tapers, from the landing at Santa Barbara to the steps of the Mission Church, which then and there received him into her bosom, giving him absolution for all sins and he best-dowered maiden in the countryside for a wife!

At the back of the house, where the peons and Inditas (Indian serving-girls) are making merry, the Jew Nathan is exploiting the contents of his pack: filmy mantillas, rebozos, embroidered gloves, silken hose, and the like. He it is who has introduced into Arcadia the credit system. To-day he hardly dares to show his shrewd face to the padrone; to-morrow—half a score of years hence—when he has set up a small store in the nearest town, Don Juan Bautista's name will be writ large in the ledger. The son of Nathan the pedlar is destined to live in a palace of Van Ness Avenue, the Juden Strasse of San Francisco; the son of Don Juan Bautista, that handsome youth who sings so charmingly, will peddle, in his turn, not rebozos, but tamales<sup>1</sup> in Monterey, the ancient capital of Alta California.

Within, the 'adobe' is given up almost entirely to the women. The men will sleep beneath the live oaks, or in the huge barn, or on the floor of the verandah. But sleep is not to be thought of till long past midnight. After supper the young people sing. Around the camp-fires of the round-ups in Colorado and Wyoming the writer has listened to 'Over the Hills to the Poor-house,' or 'Remember the Tramp has to Live,' ballads dear to the heart of the cowboy; but invariably the songs of the rodeo were love-lilts: both words and music charming and pathetic, eloquent of a simple, kindly, courteous people.

Dances succeed the songs. Don Juan Bautista is anxious to entertain some American visitors with *El Son* and *La Bamba*, the latter a favourite of the Inditas. A girl places on her head a glass of water, and then, slowly revolving, picks up the handkerchiefs which the vaqueros fling at her feet. Another Indita is crowned with a huge sombrero. Upon this is placed another and another, till the pile of hats is nearly a yard high. A pretty and accomplished performer will be sure to have dozens of silver coins dropped into her lap. After the *contra-danza*, not unlike our *Sir Roger de Coverley*, the guests bid each other good-night. Then, for an hour at least, gusts of laughter will burst from the rooms given over to the girls. These die down into silence, broken only by the shrilling of the grasshoppers and the croakings of frogs.

Outside the house the air is delightfully fresh, and fragrant

<sup>1</sup> The tamale is made of chicken (sea-gulls are said to be used when chickens are unavailable) chopped up with raisins and olives, simmered in a rich sauce, rolled in maize batter, tied up in a corn-leaf, and steamed—a most savoury delicacy!

with a thousand odours sweet in the nostrils (and the memories) of a Californian: odours of sage and pine, of wild lilac and the pungent tar-weed, and aromatic herbs innumerable. Above, the stars flare in a sky the colour of lapis-lazuli. Before dawn the sea mist steals up from the ocean, and steals back again, leaving behind a largesse of moisture, bespangling every blade of grass, each thirsty sun-parched leaf.

But long before the sun rises above the distant peaks of the Coast Range the vaqueros are in the saddle. And from each neighbouring rancho men, lynx-eyed, indefatigable, patient, have ridden forth into the cañons and hills, driving before them the cattle, suffering none to escape. Now and again some incident breaks the monotony of this colossal 'drive.' A recalcitrant two-year-old makes a wild rush for freedom down a slope where the ordinary man would hesitate to follow afoot. Rocks, crumbling shale, bristling manzanita and chaparral, squirrel holes, present no terrors to the vaquero. Horse and rider swiftly overtake their quarry. It doubles with incredible activity. From above another vaquero shouts derisively. The horse needs no touch of the huge jangling spurs. He turns and pursues, supple as a cat. At length, panting, spent, foaming at the mouth, the baffled beast rejoins the herd.

Nowadays such methods no longer obtain. Upon the small wire-fenced ranges cattle are driven at a walk to the corrals; an obstinate beast is allowed to escape. He will be easily captured on the morrow. But twenty-five years ago fences, with rare exceptions, were not to be found on the big ranchos, and the gathering together of cattle was an undertaking which had to be accomplished swiftly, thoroughly, and at all hazards.

Meantime, near the rodeo-ground the barbecue<sup>1</sup> is being prepared. Some old vaquero, too infirm of body to ride into the hills, is in command of half a dozen peons. Under his directions trenches have been dug and are now aglow with red-hot ashes. Near these, in the shade of an ancient sycamore, are rows of willow spits piercing hundreds of small juicy steaks. Presently a couple of Inditas bring down from the house the *salsa*, a sauce cunningly compounded of chillies, tomatoes and onions. The padrone himself superintends the cooling of the wines. If you look into that pool just below the waterfall, where the big trout

<sup>1</sup> The barbecue is a picnic, of which the principal feature is the roasting of meat upon spits.

lie, you will see no trout, but dozens of bottles—claret and beer and lemonade for the señoritas. Other Inditas arrive with sweetmeats, azucarillos and the like, and one of them carries two big pails full to the brim with tamales.

Above the laughter of the women and the hoarse directions of the men you will hear the bellowing of the cattle. They are coming in small bunches from every point of the compass, out of every gulch and cañon, blackening the brown pasture in front of the corrals and seeking the shade of the trees, the cool pools of the creek, and the laguna below the ranch-house.

Very soon now the cutting-out begins, and the branding of calves in the big corral. To-day calves are branded early in the spring, and beef cattle, the fat steers, are 'cut out' later. Yesterday one rodeo served for both purposes. But 'cutting out' and 'branding' challenge little attention and interest on the part of the company assembled; although you will see the women nudging each other when some famous vaquero enters the corral. Their entertainment will be provided later, when the business of the rodeo is over, after the siesta which succeeds the barbecue.

By this time the sun is high in the heavens. Clouds of fine white dust hang over and about the corrals. The face of the landscape has changed, taking on that worn, worked-out expression familiar to all who have sojourned in tropical or semi-tropical countries. The exquisite elusive tints of early morning and late evening, the delicate heliotrope and rose shadows, the ethereal amber and blue haze, the opaline mists, have vanished. It is high noon.

Don Juan Bautista dismounts, gives his horse to a boy, and ascends the platform. He tells his guests that the barbecue is awaiting them. An anticipatory glow of pleasure lightens up the somewhat stolid, yellow faces of the dueñas. One stout dame confesses that a well-roasted rib, tasting of the fire, tickles her palate more than all the tamales and chiles rellenos (stuffed green peppers) in California. The señoritas follow demurely, smiling, wondering possibly what caballero will wait on them in the willows. All are enchanted with the arrangements made for their comfort. Year after year the same place, the same food, the same faces, provoke the same courtly phrases of appreciation, which flow so smoothly from Latin lips.

The English stranger, perhaps, recalls some lines in the 'Iliad.' This feast is Homeric. The amount of meat eaten amazes him.

Some of the vaqueros perform prodigies. The white spits are passed from hand to hand, and the reek of the roasted meat seems to intoxicate the revellers. An inordinate appetite comes with the eating, engendered by the pungent salsa, and a thirst to match it. In another country, at another time, in any place save this clump of willows, such a scene might arouse repugnance, disgust. Here, in a world set far from civilisation, these Gargantuan meals excite nothing but a mild surprise. Even so ate Agamemnon and Achilles and the patriarchs of Israel.

After such a banquet sleep is the one thing possible. The men roll their cigarettes and smoke them; the women, smiling languorously, slip away. A stout Mexican puts to the blush the adage concerning empty vessels making most sound. Flat on his back, he snores abominably. Forgive him! He has been in the saddle since four in the morning, and has ridden eighty miles on the previous day! Beside him, in a graceful pose, lies a handsome youth with black curling hair and an olive skin of remarkable texture. Look well at him. Of the many now assembled together his name alone will be remembered. A seraphic expression informs his delicate features. This is José Damietta, the brigand, highwayman, and desperado, lover of many women, slayer of many men, the famous outlaw, now an innocent and obscure boy, known only as a bold and skilful vaquero. He smiles in his sleep, revealing his white, even teeth. Ten years hence he will be shot down, like a mad dog, by the Sheriff of San Luis Obispo and his posse!

Two hours pass.

The breeze stirs the tremulous leaves of the cottonwoods; some of the cattle move slowly out of the shade of the live oaks, and begin to browse upon the bunch-grass; the distant mountains reveal prismatic colours underlying their dun livery; the foothills have assumed a garment of pale green; the skies above are less crudely blue; the creek seems to prattle more joyously as it hastens to the seas; the blue jays flit chattering through the thickets of manzanita; the quail are calling in the chaparral.

José Damietta is the first to wake up. He rubs his onyx-coloured eyes and rolls a cigarette. Seeing—and hearing—stout Anton, the Mexican, he smites him hard upon the shoulder. The giant rises, groaning and wrathful. The others open their eyes and mouths. The vaqueros chaff each other. José reminds Anton that he missed the near hind hoof of a calf twice running,

and that Carmelita looked very contemptuous. Anton grunts out an inarticulate oath as José leaves the willows and betakes himself to the corrals, where a fresh horse is awaiting him. The horse neighs as his master approaches, carrying the heavy saddle and the bridle with its immense steel bit inlaid with silver. José is a dandy, but evidently he considers his horse's appearance before his own. He rubs him down, humming a song as the coat of the fine animal shines beneath his touch. Then he carefully adjusts the gay blanket and flings upon it the huge saddle. The horse grunts as the cinch is pulled tight, and snaps playfully at José's shoulder. Beyond, at the edge of the corral, flutters a petticoat. José sees it, and smiles as he springs into the saddle. The horse plunges twice before he is steadied into the easy, familiar 'lope.'

'Ojala! Josito!'

José twirls his tiny moustache.

'Ay! Magdalena, mi querida!'

The girl at the corner of the corral drops a handkerchief with a tantalising laugh, springing back as she does so. José touches his horse's flanks with the big blunt spurs. The horse glides into a gallop. Man and maid—the one going at top speed, the other standing motionless—eye the small piece of cambric, snow-white against the brown, sun-baked ground. José swoops out of and back into the saddle; the horse turns, is stopped almost at the feet of the girl, who holds out her hand for the handkerchief. José coolly pockets it. The girl blushes and praises the horse. José displays its paces, vaulting on and off and over the animal. The girl watches him with parted lips, her eyes suffused with light, her bosom heaving beneath her rebozo.

In and about the big corral the company have again assembled. Expectation animates the faces of the dueñas and sparkles in the eyes of the señoritas. They are about to witness a thrilling feat of horsemanship—el colear.

In the centre of the corral stands a young bull, long-horned, lean, savage. At a word from the mayor-domo the huge gate is flung open and two horsemen dart in. The gate is closed. The bull hesitates, grunts defiantly, and turns tail as a reata (lasso) whistles about his head. Three times he gallops round the corral, quickening his pace beneath the hoarse shouts of his pursuers. At the right moment the gate is flung open. The bull, seeing liberty and the cool laguna, bolts wildly for the opening. The

vaqueros, who have decided by lot their positions, race up alongside, one on the right, the other on the left. As the bull passes out of the corral each man reaches for the tail. The vaquero on the right has the obvious disadvantage of being obliged to 'tail' the bull with his left hand. The unwritten rules of 'el colear' exact that the beast shall be thrown and *tied* within sixty feet of the corral! As the three thunder through the opening it is seen that Anton, the stout Mexican, has the tail. With a twist of the wrist he places it beneath his left knee. At the same moment, obedient to the touch of his rider, the horse turns slightly to the right. The bull crashes end over end. A column of dust obscures the huge body. As it clears away Anton is to be seen afoot beside the bull, the pella, a piece of soft raw hide some seven feet long, in hand. With incredible swiftness and dexterity he binds the bull's legs so that the animal cannot rise. Then he bows proudly to the assembled company, who acclaim his triumph with loud cheers, waving of handkerchiefs, and clapping of hands. But perhaps the most thrilling moment is yet to come. The bull, helpless but infuriated, must be unbound. The señoritas eye with apprehension the long curving horns.

'Ay de mi, but his horns are sharp!' exclaims Carmelita.

Anton springs into the saddle. The other vaquero takes in hand his reata, loosening the coils with his thin, finely-formed fingers. Anton approaches the bull, who makes a vicious thrust at the horse. Silence has fallen upon the company.

For a minute man and beast spar for an opening. Then Anton bends down and loosens a knot, freeing one leg. He bends again. The bull rises, shaking his shaggy head, glaring defiance at his smiling conqueror. Anton incites the furious beast to charge by waving a crimson silk handkerchief.

'Ojala!' exclaims Carmelita.

The bull charges valiantly. Anton turns and flies; the other vaquero widens the noose of the reata. Anton, glancing back over his shoulder, allows the bull to close in upon him. Everybody begins to laugh: the danger is over, but not the fun. The bull is timing his last rush when the vaquero behind flings his reata. With magical precision the noose falls just in front of one of his hind legs; a jerk of the wrist from the vaquero seems to invest the circle of raw hide with the sinuous life of a serpent. The loop writhes up and around the leg of the bull. The vaquero takes his 'turns' round the horns of the saddle; his horse halts suddenly,



sticking out both forelegs. Rider and steed stand for an instant rigid, as if fashioned out of bronze. The bull crashes down, staggers up, and stands still, a ludicrous object on three legs, the fourth leg extended behind like the handle of a teapot. His captor loosens the coils about the horns of the saddle. And now a quick eye will just perceive a small loop travelling with amazing speed from the hand of the vaquero, along the reata, till it reaches and encircles the head of the bull. In an instant the beast is securely tied up head to tail. The vaquero gallops round him, as he totters and falls, amidst the shouts and laughter of the onlookers. The vaquero dismounts and loosens the coils. When the bull is once more free he declines further combat. Presently you will see him knee deep in the laguna, none the worse for his encounter, but a humbler and more domesticated beast.

The picking up of coins, big shining pesos (dollars), follows. The padrone lays several in a row, each some five-and-twenty yards from the other. These the vaqueros must snatch from the ground, riding at a gallop, and each coin so snapped up becomes the spoil of its *Autolytus*.

Meantime the señoritas are entreating a young man to perform a feat which has made him known from Monterey to San Diego. He is a cadet of the Bandini family, famous for its dashing cavaliers and beautiful women. Laughingly he consents. Below, his horse is tied in the shade of a live oak. His host and he disappear, the former returning alone after an absence of some twenty minutes. Every eye on the platform is turned towards the adobe ranch-house, some two hundred yards distant.

'Ay—ay, here he comes!'

Young Bandini approaches at a gallop, holding aloft a tray covered with glasses filled nearly to the brim with champagne. He charges the platform at top speed, and as one nervous girl shrieks her apprehension of a catastrophe, reins up, presenting his brittle wares unbroken, the wine hardly spilled.

Races bring the afternoon's entertainment to a close. Horse is matched against horse, and man against horse. In the latter the competitors must run to and round a post some thirty yards from the starting-point. As a rule the man afoot wins easily.

Fifty years ago (and less) a bull and grizzly bear fight was likely to be an attraction at a big rodeo. The grizzly had to be captured by the vaqueros: a seemingly difficult and dangerous task, yet one easily accomplished by these wizards of the reata.

Grizzlies were very common in the ranges and foothills of the Santa Lucia mountains, and ravaged the flocks and herds of the rancheros up to a comparatively recent date. All bears, no matter how numerous they may be in certain localities, are hard to find when you look for them; but the grizzly was occasionally met in open glades lying between ridges of impenetrable chaparral, and there fell an easy prey to the vaquero, who would rope him, tie him to a tree, and then gallop away for assistance. Three men were sufficient to lead 'Uncle Ephraim' to the corral prepared for him. Two—one on each side—flung their reatas over his head and kept them taut; the third man brought up the rear with his reata fast to the monster's hind leg. If he struggled, they stretched him out. As a rule, after the most furious resistance he would waddle along quietly enough.

The writer never witnessed one of these Titanic combats. The bear had the best of it nine times out of ten; but old Californians testify that the sport was, comparatively speaking, tame, the bull or bear frequently declining to fight. If prolonged, such a contest must have been unspeakably cruel and demoralising. Bull-fights, too, common enough before the Stars and Stripes were unfurled at the Presidio of Monterey, are now forbidden by law. The writer was invited to one of the last held in Southern California. The feat known as 'la silla' was attempted by a veteran who, it was said, had learned his art in Madrid. When the bull is sufficiently enraged, a chair is brought into the ring, in which a bandillero seats himself, holding in each hand a small beribboned dart. The men who have been engaged in provoking to fury the bull now retire, and the bull, gazing with bloodshot eyes around the arena, sees a silent figure sitting alone in the centre of the ring, presenting his back to the charge. The bull rushes, head down, at his enemy, who smiles. A second later the chair is tossed aloft, but the man at the supreme moment has leapt aside, deftly planting his darts in the animal's shoulders. A marvellous feat, truly! But at the bull-fight in question the hero's pluck failed. As the bull charged, the man in the chair fled, leaping nimbly to the top bars of the corral. The spectators shouted with laughter, but public opinion approved the toreador's flight. Of all present, the bull seemed to be the most surprised and disappointed.

Such a scene as the writer has attempted to reproduce is of the past. The few big ranchos which remain yet unsubdivided in

Southern California are fenced, cross-fenced, owned by Americans, and 'run' upon sound business principles, which eliminate all expenses save those which are absolutely necessary. The padrones, as they were called, grudged nothing to their guests. Their hospitality was large as the domains over which they held undisputed sway; in every sense—patriarchal. Some of these *hidalgos*—for *hidalgos* they were—could not compute the value of their possessions. Vallejo, for instance, in 1846 had eight hundred trained *vaquero* horses on his ranchos, of which thirty-five were picked *caballos de su silla*—his own private saddle-horses. He owned at least forty thousand head of cattle, five thousand mares, sheep innumerable, and other animals. Amongst his peons were carpenters, weavers, blacksmiths, masons.

The writer recalls with pleasure the welcome which he has received at the hands of *rancheros* whose very names are forgotten on estates they owned less than a quarter of a century ago. It was no easy matter to escape from your kindly host and hostess. The courteous phrase, 'My house is yours, señor,' was no empty figure of speech. A fresh horse, to be chosen by the traveller out of his host's *caballada*, was offered freely; at the foot of the bed, beneath a napkin, lay a heap of 'guest silver,' never counted, out of which the needy were mutely entreated to help themselves!

If these simple, generous Arcadians could return to the land they loved, with what dismay and horror would they perceive the changes which the Anglo-Saxon has wrought. The splendid trees are cut down; the foothills, ablaze with gorgeous wild flowers, have been ploughed up; the marshes, the haunt of myriads of wild-fowl, have been drained. Only the mountain peaks of Santa Lucia remain the same, sentinels of a paradise across which is inscribed the grim word—Ichabod!

The change, of course, was inevitable. The dawn of a new century finds California rich and prosperous. Gold, silver, oil, wheat and fruits have filled her coffers to the brim; and yet, south of Point Conception, the soil and climate of the *lotos* land would seem to be pre-eminently adapted to pastoral uses and the Latin temperament. The daughters of the pioneers who succeeded the Spanish bloom like the roses of Santa Barbara—and fade as quickly. Nervous diseases make them old in middle age; *anæmia* sucks the good red blood from their veins, even as the Southern sun sucks the sap from the grass. In a country where sickness was once almost unknown, doctors, dentists, faith-healers,

and quacks increase and multiply as the quail did of yore. It is interesting to speculate what the end will be. In the late eighties men from the blizzard-stricken mid-west, from the boreal northern States, from the over-populated Atlantic seaboard, poured into Southern California. Deserts, it is true, the arid lands around Los Angeles and San Diego, were irrigated by this human torrent, and now bloom like the garden by Bendemeer's stream; but the flood percolated also into immense areas where it was lost. Hundreds of thousands of acres, diverted from their pastoral uses by the feverish energy of the Gringo (the name given by the old Spanish-Californian to the Yankee), have been suffered to relapse into sheep and cattle ranges again. Innumerable homesteads upon Government land have been taken up, ploughed up, planted to vines and fruit trees—and abandoned. Gold came out of the waste places of California in prodigious quantities, and an ironical fate has ordained that it should return in Protean form whence it came.

The old order has been obliterated by the new. One song, a favourite with the caballeros and señoritas, had peculiar significance :

Adios, adios, para siempre—— adios !

The writer has said elsewhere that he never heard it sung without reflecting that it was the swan-song of the Latin to the all-conquering Anglo-Saxon.

MARK MACINTOSH'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE 'COCK.'

ALFRED, headwaiter at the 'Cock'  
 Where nowadays I dine,  
 Go fetch me—it is eight o'clock—  
 My usual glass of wine;  
 I'll sing, as sang in happier days  
 The Laureate—*prosit omen!*—  
 Who voiced your predecessor's praise,  
 And left you his prænomen.

For who but you has power to charm  
 The heart that's out of tune,  
 And antiquarian minds disarm  
 Of yearnings for the moon?—  
 While Hygieia plies her craft,  
 And doctors are despotic,  
 While men but sip where once they quaffed  
 And own themselves neurotic;

While yet we read in history  
 Of those 'two-bottle' names,  
 And marvel not, but merely sigh  
 For our enfeebled frames:—  
 Perchance the air my ancestors  
 Inhaled, was antiseptic;  
 Perchance a life spent out of doors  
 Maintained them more eupeptic.

I drink your health in fellowship,  
 Will Waterproof, my Will,  
 Like you I love to sit and sip  
 My after-dinner gill;  
 Methinks we are of kindred sort,  
 Full-blooded, shrewd, and youthful,  
 Yet, where you took your pint of port,  
 I take a modest toothful.

Reason enough—I hear your scorn—  
 Why these half-hearted lines  
 Boast little of the vigour born  
 Of more heroic vines :  
 Besides, I plead this vintage apes  
 The liquor loved of Spaniards—  
 Smacks less of true Oporto grapes  
 Than South Australian tanyards.

I wail an age degenerate :  
 'Tis truth the poet sings,  
 The glories of our blood and state  
 Are unsubstantial things ;  
 The Muse has drunk herself to death,  
 And Moschus has his Bion,  
 And dead is Queen Elizabeth,  
 And dead is King Pandion.

O souls of poets dead and gone !  
 Saint Dunstan's by the Fleet  
 From you a passing splendour won—  
 'Twas just across the street ;  
 The choruses that there you sang  
 Are echoes now and hollow ;  
 We can but guess how loudly rang  
 The rafters in the Apollo ;

Where Jonson held high revelry  
 And learnt from sack his art,  
 Where, maybe, with good ale for key  
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart.  
 Ah, how you crowned your cups of yore  
 And toasted gallant lasses,  
 While shuffling on the sanded floor  
 Sim Wadlowe filled your glasses !

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Alfred—I murmur, but he hears  
 Above the clash of plates—  
 Go fetch the coffee-cup that cheers  
 But not intoxicates :

A touch, a flame, the charm is snapt,  
 The hour of hours is pending,  
 And nomad Fancy straight is rapt  
 To watch the clouds ascending.

This bean has travelled many a mile ;  
 'Twas grown by Cingalese  
 In lands where only man is vile  
 And all the prospects please.  
 This cigarette was rolled perchance  
 Beside the Euxine coast-ring,  
 And still is fragrant of romance,  
 Harîm, and sack, and bowstring.

Alas, this coffee only serves  
 As Bacchus' antidote ;  
 My Lady Nicotine unnerves  
 The poet's liquid throat ;  
 Supposing Doctor Middleton  
 Had lit a Larranaga,  
 The vine had lost a champion,  
 And Port her noblest saga.

So, Alfred, take away the cup,  
 Put out the cigarette,  
 While Fancy, ere I give her up,  
 Shows one more vision yet ;  
 For when I tread the asphodel,  
 Alfred, I think your spectre  
 Will dance attendance there as well  
 And pour for me the nectar.

When I am old and full of sleep,  
 And wine is no more red,  
 Into my narrow grave I'll creep  
 And let no more be said ;  
 For other men this wine shall flow  
 And make them maudlin-clever,  
 For they shall come, and they shall go,  
 And you will wait—for ever ?



Another Alfred may arise  
 And to remoter time  
 Dispense like hospitalities  
 With manners as sublime :  
 Your fame shall stand, as stands an oak  
 More honoured in the gnarling,  
 And men shall eat and drink and smoke  
 And think of England's Darling.

The time will come, and that ere long,  
 As cooler grows my blood,  
 When swanlike I shall end my song  
 And gently take the flood ;  
 But now, to celebrate the strife,  
 I'll carve on Fancy's trophy—  
 One clouded hour of vinous life  
 Is worth an age of coffee.

I thank you for that glass of wine,  
 And bless the hand that gave ;  
 It filled me with a fire divine,  
 And made me Fancy's slave ;  
 God grant I feel this same good-will  
 To all men, when I slip hence :  
 So, Alfred, if you please, my bill,  
 And here's your usual threepence.

F. S.

## PROVINCIAL LETTERS.

### XIII. A HOUSE IN HERTFORDSHIRE.

HERTS. Elizabethan farm-house to be let; capable of improvement; stands alone with extensive view; interesting associations; four miles from station, G. N. R.; suitable for artist or literary man; moderate rent. Apply &c.

THE advertisement was captivating. What could be more congenial to a misanthrope of the twentieth century than to find himself actually four miles from a railway station, and to a lover of letters than to find himself in the Hertfordshire of Izaak Walton and Charles Lamb, and that, too, in an Elizabethan house 'with associations'? The modern solecism of 'to be let' instead of 'to let' gave us a moment's pause, as suggesting that the writer of the notice was perhaps less in touch with literature than his quotation from Dr. Johnson about the view pretended; but our imagination had been fired and we took bicycle and went to see for ourselves. The house proved to be even more captivating than the advertisement; and, to make a short story, we were captured. What we found was an E-shaped Tudor building of rosy brick standing in a forecourt with a low wall of the same auroral colour; its long square-headed windows, with their stone mullions, being filled, as was right, with leaded diamond-shaped panes. The house was only one room deep, so that it reminded us of Spenser's 'House of Pride'; but the staircase was immense, giving an effect of spaciousness beyond the fact, and such rooms as there were were large, and, what is more, lofty. The 'associations' we found to be with the great Queen herself, who is locally reported to have hidden in one of the attics; on what occasion we could not ascertain. It must have been when she was playing hide-and-seek on some visit as a little girl to the B.'s, whose manor-house it was; for there was no room that could ever have been missed in a search. But the phrase of the advertisement that had most taken our fancy was 'capable of improvement.' Englishmen are born with a passion for improving something; it is well known that if their instincts in this sort do not get enough exercise in the Legislature or some lesser council, or in their own business, or gardens, they will take to improving each other, often with disastrous consequences.

Our talents here were promised abundant scope. The garden was a wilderness of weeds, in which no esculent vegetables were recognisable except a gaunt cabbage and a few currant bushes; the farmyard would tax all our invention to convert into whatever form of goodliness seemed possible—rose-garden or bowling-green; and the house itself cried aloud for the improving influences of whitewash and carbolic soap. Then there was the joy of furnishing. The mind stretched forward to the excitement of excursions to St. Albans, and Hitchin, and Hertford, in search of grandfather clocks and copper coal-scuttles and oak benches and fire-dogs and generally furniture of any other age than our own.

When, in process of time, we were settled in and were preparing to enjoy our sober hermitage, we began to realise that we were to be less lonely than we had dreamed. First, a nest of cottages discovered itself, of whom we soon learned that we were the proper prey. Their hares and rabbits we were content to engross without asking questions; the fruit of their orchards we were fain to purchase at famine prices because we had none of our own; we let them persuade us that a house so lonely required a watch-dog of singular ferocity and a kennel which from its cost might have been 'ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion'; and all the worn-out farm implements from the last half-century of county sales—diggers, and wheelbarrows, and scythes—presented themselves for purchase. One day there came a cockatoo that had been caught in a tree. The pious elder who brought it explained that, being in doubt how to pay his rent at Michaelmas, this bird had come from above to supply his need; so that its price was 3*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* We demurred to this predestinarian method of fixing values, but promised to keep the bird a few days to discover his points. On the third day he released himself from his chain by opening a link with his beak—an art he had evidently perfected by practice—and sped off again into the woods, perhaps to supply the rent of some other pious cottager. Meanwhile we found ourselves in a difficulty. The bird was not ours, and we had lost him. It was clearly a case for arbitration, and we suggested that it should be referred to the clergyman of the parish. But an unanticipated arbitrator appeared in the person of the village constable, who had got wind of the matter and was indignant that no notice of the bird's capture had been given to him. The would-be Elijah accordingly found himself a delinquent and beholden to my good offices to avert the displeasure of the

law ; so that, in the event, the affair resolved itself into a distribution of *douceurs*. A second and far more objectionable invasion of our solitude arose from the fact, unknown to us, and we trust also to the advertiser of the house, that we were scheduled as a 'local curiosity' in the Hertfordshire programme of the bicycling world. I am not likely to forget the first Saturday afternoon of our residence. Up the hill came wild trumpeting as of a herd of elephants in pain, and into our newly gravelled drive there rushed panting a motor tricycle, followed by three motor bicycles, and after a slight interval by a flock of the ordinary species. They passed into the orchard which commands the 'extensive view' already spoken of, and proceeded to unpack their wallets and enjoy their luncheon and the wide prospect together. I felt that it was idle, and might even be dangerous, to interpose between trumpeting elephants and their provender ; so I waited till the signal of repletion was given by the striking of lucifer matches, and the upcurling of thin columns of smoke, and then proceeded to the scene of refection, which I found as 'white as snow in Salmon' with sandwich-papers. 'Do you gentlemen know,' I began, 'that you are trespassing?'

'We're not doing any harm, are we?' said the rider of the motor tricycle, who seemed to be the captain.

'Well, no,' I said, 'that is, if you will be so good as to collect your scattered papers. But for all that you are trespassing. You wouldn't like me to bring my lunch and eat it without leave in your drawing-room.'

'But this isn't your drawing-room, sir,' was the reply.

'Well then, in your garden!'

'I haven't got a garden.'

This repartee excited merriment. As argument did not seem to appeal to elephant nature, I shifted my ground and asked another of the party to what I was indebted for the honour of the visit. 'Well,' he replied, 'the "Hub" said there was a view, and so it was worth while doing the extra four miles from Tewin, but I've seen a better view from Primrose Hill.' This excited more merriment, and I saw my opportunity. 'Would you mind then,' I said, 'writing to—the paper you spoke of—and saying that my view is really not worth the extra journey?' And so we parted in good humour. I learned afterwards that the attraction of Tewin is a tomb in the churchyard out of which spring six sycamores. Legend has it that the lady who is there buried

doubted of the resurrection; whence the miracle; and every bicycle club in London deems it necessary to come down and be convinced by it.

Our solitude, therefore, it will be understood, was not so suited to the artist or man of letters as we had been led to believe; on some days with a barrel-organ, a motor-car or two, and various parties of pilgrims in brakes, it became, in Cowley's phrase, 'an Islington almost.' And then there were the callers. It would ill become me to complain of the civility of our neighbours (using that term in a wide sense), who drove their five and ten miles to leave cards on the new-comers, and welcome us into 'the fruitful fields of pleasant Hartfordshire.' With some of them an acquaintance thus begun has ripened into friendship; with others it has remained a bowing acquaintance. The only calls we have, here or elsewhere, had reason to resent have been those made at the unsolicited instance of good-natured friends. I don't know if any novelist has remarked upon the manners sometimes displayed by people who have made a call at the request of common acquaintances, supposing they are so unfortunate as to be found at home when the call is returned. They are almost as interesting as the manners of ladies who hold drawing-room meetings for charitable purposes. (Of course if you are at home when they perform the initial call, they are constrained to behave as though they did it from a free heart and mere goodwill.) The game, as played, opens by their not quite catching your name as you are announced, and looking a little distracted, as if to wonder what you want. The fatal move at this point is to say: 'I think we have common friends in the Joneses,' because the retort comes pat: 'Oh, have we?' and you have to begin again. A safer opening is: 'I am sorry you did not find us at home when you called,' because this leaves them face to face with the responsibility for the first step, which they must either explain away, or mend their manners. A skilful player would of course not be checkmated so early, ladies having a way of eluding both logic and responsibility which is my perpetual envy; and if they have been polite only by request, they must be allowed to mark the distinction, in case you should think they wanted to know you. But it is ungracious to dwell on such a topic; for the only house that thus slammed its door in our faces under pretence of opening it was not tenanted by an indigenous stock of 'hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire.'

And so we come back to Charles Lamb. I must confess that

it is only very lately, after reading an essay of Dr. Ainger's in an old volume of the 'English Illustrated Magazine' lent me by a friendly divine, that I am become learned in the various spots sacred to the memory of Saint Charles. My first efforts to gain information about them, made at a garden party on first coming into the county, were not fortunate; but like every seeker after truth I had a reward, if not what I expected. I was talking with a clergyman of the type that always delights me, well set up and with an unmistakable air of gentleman, and very little of the conventional parson in dress or manner. To my request for enlightenment about the Lambs he replied: 'Oh, they lived quite near at Brocket Hall. The house was begun by Sir Matthew, the first baronet, and finished by the first Lord Melbourne. Of course you know all about Lady Caroline Lamb and Byron. Yes, you should certainly see Brocket; it has one of the most beautiful parks in England; and it was the home not only of Melbourne but of Palmerston; both died there.' I hastened to explain that by the Lambs I had meant Charles Lamb and his sister. But my friendly clergyman did not know them. 'No,' he said, 'I don't recall any Lamb of the name of Charles. There was George, and William, and Frederick. Anyhow you should see Brocket. It was once part of Hatfield Chace, and its oaks are as old as any in England. All this part of Hertfordshire was once forest, and that is why the roads twist about so. It was under one of the Brocket oaks that the Lady Elizabeth was sitting when the news came of Queen Mary's death. At least that is the Lamb tradition; the Cecil tradition puts the oak at Hatfield.' Happily other inquiries put me on the track of the other Lambs, in whom, not being a politician, I felt more interest, and as the fine days at last came with departing summer we visited the shrines. But I am not sure that I did not more enjoy reading about them in the guide books. At Widford, for instance, there is little enough to recall Lamb himself, even less than there is to recall Shakespeare at Stratford; for he was not born there but in London, the house which he loved and has described in his 'Essays' is pulled down, and the tomb that pilgrims visit is not his own, which is at Edmonton, but his grandmother's. Even that has suffered at the hand of fortune and the pious restorer. As Lamb describes it in 'The Grandam':

A plain stone barely tells  
The name and date to the chance passenger.

But as we found it, the passage from 'The Grandam' was cut on the stone itself, which thereby ceased to be 'a plain stone barely telling &c.' We learned that an elm branch had fallen on the grave-stone and broken it, and 'the opportunity was taken' &c., &c. There are some opportunities, we generally call them 'liberties,' which ought not to be taken.

I venture to think a sentiment for places must be a sentiment at first hand. Lamb loved Widford and Mackery End because of their associations with his youth. It is difficult for other people to love them because of their association with Charles Lamb. Perhaps I am a Philistine; perhaps I feel the direct sentiment too strongly to have any feeling left for the indirect. The fact remains that, much as I love Lamb (on this side of editing him), it was not at Widford or Mackery End that I dropped the tear of sensibility this summer, but at the little village of S—; where I myself lived for a few months some forty years ago. The picture of the place has hung ever since in a very sacred nook of memory, and I have cared less and less as the separating years have grown in number, to compare it with the reality. But now that I was actually living within a few miles of the village, with time on my hands, the temptation proved irresistible, and with a lifting (or was it a sinking?) of heart I found myself approaching the place of my dreams. I had been sent to S—, when about six years old, to the care of an old dame—at least, I thought her old—who kept the village school, that I might recover in the strong air of the place from some childish ailment. As I recall her, she was an erect, homely-looking woman with cheeks like streaky apples, and a hand whose firmness I had more than one opportunity of estimating. I lived with her in the cottage adjoining the school-house, and naturally enough, when I was somewhat recovered, and able to be mischievous, she put me into school to be under her eye. I remember little enough of what happened from day to day. There were a good many scrapes, most of them (like the primeval scrape of Eden) connected with apples; in which my tempter was the rector's son, some two years my elder. They were atoned for by discipline. It is the discipline of the school that I chiefly remember. The girls were punished by 'thimble-pie.' They crossed their hands on their heads and were rapped with a thimble on the knuckles, or, supposing they withdrew them, on their crowns. The punishment seemed cruel then, and it seems so still. The boys, for grave offences, were punished in more primitive and fundamental



fashion. I remember a punishment for truancy which moved our youthful pity and fear like some masterpiece of tragedy. The boy—his name would not come to mind, or I should have sought him out—had been threatened with the birch if he repeated the offence, and of course, truancy being in the blood, he repeated it, and then reappeared the next day as though nothing had happened. I remember still the hardly suppressed excitement of the school as he came in. I can still see the light in the old dame's eyes as, after prayers, she took the birch from her desk, and bore down upon him. Then came a pause; something had evidently gone wrong; it proved to be that the young rebel had endeavoured to make assurance doubly sure by tying up his unmentionables with string. But he had miscalculated the resources of authority. A knife, fetched from the inner room by a satellite, made all too short work of his defences; and although, if my memory serves me, he bit in a most unsportsmanlike way, nothing could arrest the strokes of Nemesis. At the end of the morning there appeared his father, with a knife in one hand and a piece of bread and cheese in the other, and we looked to see murder done; but after some words had passed he turned away cowed by the indomitable dame. Another scene that comes up into memory was the inspection of the school which fell during my visit. To prepare for the examination all the slates were boiled in the good dame's copper. The examiner was a pompous clergyman with an enormous stock swathed round and round by a white neck-cloth, who annoyed me by mispronouncing the mistress's name. After the inspection came a prize-giving with recitations. I wonder if such entertainments were usual in Hertfordshire in the early 'sixties, or whether the little village of S—— was eminent for its humanities. The head girl, dressed for the business in cap and apron, recited a piece which began:

Good morning, ma'am,  
I've come to give you warning, ma'am;  
I've put on my best apron for the purpose, ma'am.

It consisted, I believe, of home truths to mistresses—a sort of Saturnalia of domestic service—but I have sought it in vain in modern collections. Of my own experiences I can recall little but sins, with their expiations. On one occasion I made an attempt to assert superiority over the little yokels by refusing to rise from my seat when the rector left the room. Being remonstrated with, I performed at his next visit an exaggerated

act of reverence, by mounting on the form and waving my arms. But my triumph was short-lived, for it chanced that the good man had forgotten his umbrella, and returning for it he surprised my demonstration; which put me out of countenance, as I was something of a favourite with him, and was privileged to hold his book while he christened the babies.

Well, there does not seem in these trivial recollections much food for sentiment; and yet as I drew near the village I could have laughed or cried with equal ease. I found the country more beautiful than I anticipated; it was the rolling, well-wooded Hertfordshire landscape, but I remembered nothing of that. A chalk-pit and 'the quick' were the only natural features that had impressed themselves. The 'quick' (still so called) was a path down the hill, from the church to the road below, arched over with thorns and hornbeam; and as I saw it again in the peaceful light of a September afternoon it justified all my vague affection. The church, I regretted to discover, was a hideous structure, restored to more than its native ugliness in 1855, so that I must have known it in its newest gloss; I saw my seat, west of the font, where I used to assist at baptisms; I saw also, for the first time, though without any thrill, the interior of the mysterious chamber into which the minister used to disappear in white, to emerge again in black. I found his grave in the churchyard; and noted with something of a shock that I had myself reached the age at which he seemed to me then so venerable. As I stood looking at the inscription, I heard the village children practising the Sunday Psalms; they were singing to a chant of Purcell's 'I do not exercise myself in great matters that are too high for me,' as I must have sung it all those years ago; and I felt that at S—I might perhaps learn the lesson over again. We looked into the schoolroom. The mistress was not awful like the dame I had known; and everything seemed proportionately diminished. The walls were washed with blue, instead of white; and instead of a broad spaciousness with texts here and there—'Swear not at all,' 'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord'—there was a confused mass of pictures: Jerusalem, the Squire, lions, sheep and other curious wild-fowl. But I saw in an outhouse the copper where the slates were boiled; and I saw the window of the little room where I used to sleep, and where I spent one very bright summer's day—'from morn to dewy eve'—learning the first page of words in Johnson's Dictionary, awful words like ab-an-don, which I still hate.

URBANUS SYLVAN.

*MIDNIGHT IN CLOUDLAND: AN EXPERIMENT.*

A NIGHT balloon voyage is, from the nature of the case, such a rare experience, necessarily attended, moreover, with so much chance incident that it can hardly fail to supply a story peculiarly its own. Any interest naturally attaching, however, to the narrative I have to relate is much increased by the experimental work that was carried out, and by the evidence of a large number of independent observers who, readily lending both eyes and ears, have had each their own special tale to add.

Briefly stated the exploit undertaken had for its main object to collect reliable facts calculated to aid in the fascinating study of perplexing sounds, and yet more perplexing silence, and in the following up of those strange stray voices which sometimes break in upon us, and give rise to so much mystery. Two typical examples of the far hearing of sounds, as of cannon which were hard or impossible to trace, had been brought to the knowledge of the writer, and gave excuse for, as they will also give point to, the special experiment he has to describe.

Near his own home in Berkshire there exists a large pit supplying clay earth for some important brick-kilns of long standing. The pit, which is semicircular in outline, is dug deep out of a steep hillside, and looks squarely towards the south. Its rear wall is sheer and lofty, and fifty years ago, before a roadway intruded itself, was loftier still. It was at that period that the following remarkable phenomenon was observed and recorded. One Sunday afternoon three gentlemen connected with the kilns were standing within the pit, the air being quiet and the little wind that stirred blowing up from the south. Suddenly borne on the back of this slight breeze came the sound of distant firing sufficiently loud to arrest the attention of the little party assembled. The reports coming from the southward the natural inference would have been that they were the Portsmouth guns, which could be occasionally heard across the intervening forty miles. But then the day was Sunday, so that this explanation seemed impossible, and it was only after the lapse of two or three

days that it was learned that at the hour in question the Emperor of the French was reviewing his fleet at Cherbourg. Obviously the sound, after traversing no less than a hundred and forty miles, had been gathered up by a natural receiver, and brought to a focus at the spot where the observers were standing. Here was a happy and complete explanation of a puzzle, but the case which follows remains a puzzle still.

Some months ago, on a day marked by no particular stress of weather, the sounds as of distress guns out at sea were distinctly heard at a look-out station on the east coast of England, and a boat was ordered out to discover the source of the alarm, and, if possible, to render aid. Ten miles away at another station on the coast the same signals were heard, and here again a boat was ordered out on a similar errand. In the end it chanced that neither boat proceeded to sea, for it presently became known that the life-boat at the neighbouring seaport town had put out with twelve oars, and should be capable of reaching the signalling vessel at high speed. The life-boat, however, returned, reporting not only that they had seen nothing, but that inquiries proved that there had been no vessel carrying guns within conceivable earshot. One other mystery to which there is abundant testimony remains to be mentioned, namely, the not infrequent inaudibility of sound signals when really within the range of easy hearing.

These and other puzzling phenomena of a kindred nature induced the writer to follow up former research by the experiment now to be described. Waiting for the comparative silence and calmer air of night hours, it was determined to take a balloon up to a moderate distance in the sky, and there to fire a series of powerful detonating signals, inviting listeners over a wide area to make careful observation and to be precise as to the times of hearing; it being arranged, for the purposes of verification, that these times should be at certain irregular intervals.

The choosing of a suitable day or night for ballooning purposes had throughout the past season been a complete lottery, and many misgivings were felt when the day ultimately fixed upon arrived. Indeed, seldom were weather signs and forecasts more ambiguous and at variance. The glass had been falling since overnight, and the wind, freshening through the morning, showed much local disturbance, if not a serious return of broken weather. Still it was unquestionable that each fresh gust of

wind as it swept past came headlong out of the south, and as this promised a balloon sail up the whole length of England the aeronaut had no reasonable fears of being carried out to sea even if he travelled all night, and cloud should shut out all view of the earth.

This was the outlook from high ground in Berkshire during morning hours, and the same conditions prevailed apparently when the Crystal Palace was reached late in the afternoon, and the weather-wise, as also the little group of experts gathered on the balloon ground, prophesied that at 10 P.M., when the start was to be made, the balloon would take a course that must land its passengers somewhere in the midland counties, or possibly even in Yorkshire, ere dawn. Presently Messrs. Brock began their display of fireworks, and their graceful miniature balloons climbing up and vanishing towards the north told the same alluring tale. So again did big fleecy clouds speeding rapidly far aloft.

Yet all these considerations notwithstanding, the balloon in the end, as so often, took everyone by surprise, and floating away gently and punctually from the grasp of its restrainers, suddenly made a sidelong dash towards the top of a tall poplar, and headed off on a course of its own nearly due east, flying fast and faster as it climbed above the grounds. This was not only unexpected but undesirable, for now not the length of England but merely some fifty miles intervened before the sea would be reached, a distance which would be narrowed down to but thirty if only one particular direction, that of Sea Reach, were taken and maintained. Such a contingency, however, seemed to entail such exceptional ill luck that it was not seriously entertained, and the work in hand was proceeded with.

It was a quiet little send-off from the familiar grounds, where one is accustomed to the gay gathering and the flutter of excitement followed by the enthusiastic cheer of the crowd. There were but the few helpers needed to keep the balloon in check when buffeted with a wind, which now blew at upwards of thirty miles an hour. There was the aeronautical party, four in all, each entrusted with separate duties; there were also a score of friends and well-wishers who, even at that late hour, had assembled to see the voyagers well away.

Their parting request was to urge our firing a salute as soon as we had risen to a safe altitude, and this was accordingly done while yet the grounds lay spread below us in the broad moonlight. A

guncotton cartridge, attached to a length of twin wire, was lowered till it hung suspended a hundred feet below, and then fired electrically from the car. A sharp crack followed, and after the lapse of some seconds, with a mighty outburst the earth thundered back the echo of our report, which rolled away among the houses, and, with a final bang off the bluff face of the Palace, died away.

Evidently the air at this hour was, as we expected, eminently transparent to sound, and we were quick to catch the familiar voices of the night at long range. A clock from a steeple far down was striking the first quarter after the hour. Canine custodians throughout the suburbs everywhere were exclaiming against the unwonted object in the sky. Shrieks shrill and piercing came up from trains hurrying along and betrayed to the eye only by wreaths of glowing steam; and not only so, but even away on far distant lines of rail the puffing of an engine could be heard with astounding intensity, as it panted laboriously on some incline.

Presently more musical voices joined in in chorus and unexpectedly. We had just fired a report after a silent interval of some minutes, when we were almost instantly answered by the deep and varied hooters of vessels vying with each other and then fading away in long-drawn cadence. Clearly we had been nearing the river, and now a rippled gleam of moonlight revealed a silver loop dotted with dark objects that bristled with slender masts. Surely Thames, though in her muddiest reach, never looked so fair. Across her flood clusters of habitations lining either bank emulated each other in lighting up the sky. One large town on the hither shore—identified as Woolwich—shed heavenward a lurid glare as of a vast conflagration, and further down blazed a similar but lesser fire—unmistakably Gravesend, towards which we ourselves appeared to be speeding. Behind us the light of London was becoming swallowed up in haze, while far and wide over the broad black country pale patches of a soft glow told where silent towns lay sleeping.

For the sake of charting our actual track, and also to determine the varying air streams which were encountered, addressed postcards were cast out in pairs, one loaded so as to fall quickly to earth, its fellow attached to a small parachute to float away on the wind. It was in the neighbourhood of the river that wayward currents chiefly declared themselves, and brought about some

curious results, to which we must shortly give attention. A curious but not unintelligible sight was presented by two parachutes similar in all respects and cast overboard at an interval of a few seconds only. One commenced slowly descending in an orthodox manner, the other started away more after the fashion of a kite, slanting upwards and far away into the sky on a path of its own, into which it had been compelled by some chance up-draught or 'chimney current,' as this form of air stream is commonly designated.

The story of our night-errant postcards was instructive and not a little curious. Like true waifs, some did not come home till many days had elapsed, and several were weather-stained and worn. Of those which were loaded and fell direct to earth nearly all were recovered, one the same night within ten minutes of its falling; others alighting on roadways were picked up by peasant folk, who were early abroad on the morrow; two fell at railway stations and were returned by officials; one waited till opening hours outside a public-house. The few that escaped observation may have fallen in woods or on roofs; but they found no certain hiding-places in gardens or in open fields. One had secreted itself in a chalk quarry, yet even here it was discovered the next morning, though that morning was Sunday.

But those missives which, attached to parachutes, floated on the wind and took long flights before coming to earth, have a more remarkable tale to tell, yet all—that all being fifty per cent.—combined in giving the same, and that extremely interesting, evidence. The early flights were all north, *i.e.* the path of the balloon being easterly they must on dropping out of sight have diverged on a course almost at right angles. And of this there seem only two possible explanations. Either there was a low south wind blowing over the north of Kent, a survival of the wind which had blown through the earlier part of the day, or else a lower wind, as so often, was seeking the river.

This is common enough. A river, especially a tidal river, will at certain seasons have a warmer temperature than the land, giving rise to upward currents of air which must be fed by air streams setting in from either shore; and corroborating this view there remain two other noteworthy facts, (1) after a while there comes a break in the postcard record, suggesting that a sequence of the flyers were carried not only towards but into the water, and secondly, after Essex was reached these parachutes flew no longer



north but south, or once more towards the river, as though drawn irresistibly towards its flood.

It was shortly after this that we crossed the river from Dartford Marshes to Grays on the Essex shore, and again a little while elapsed and we found ourselves hard by the river again, the peculiar bend of which set us thinking. Were we not nearing Sea Reach, just at that one point of which we knew we must be wary? If a line be drawn on a map from London to Mucking Lighthouse, and then prolonged, it will be found to lie completely over the estuary of the river and so out to sea; and it was this very line that we were all too certainly following. Long experience told us that as soon as the approaching bank was reached practically no more land lay before us until the entire breadth of the German Ocean had been crossed.

But here a curious illusion met the eye, for another broad but less clearly defined river was seen to branch off from the bed of the Thames, tracing out a vague and unknown course of its own as if to some shadowy sea. This apparition, after puzzling us a little while, was ascertained to be a trail of smoke which issued from a cluster of lime-kilns and which wandered down the wind, lying low and reflecting back the moonlight, much as did the surface of the neighbouring water.

Here then, urged by prudence, we came to earth, within a field or two of the broad river-bed, where the soil was soft and marshy, where the heavy night air felt dank and clammy, and where genuine mosquitoes, the imports of foreign trading vessels lying in the docks hard by, harassed us sorely as we laboured with our stricken, struggling monster. Two belated countrymen, and two only, had marked the unwonted object in the sky, and came to lend their help; but other aid there was none, and the chance of finding a horse and cart at that late hour and in that lonely district was quite out of the question. Accordingly the balloon was rolled up in a bulky mass with its great round valve upwards, and so we left it through the night, lying alone in a field of rye like a fallen Cyclops, with its one eye gazing at the moon.

The sequel of our story was told piecemeal in many hundreds of letters shortly received from observers who had taken up stations along the entire length of the country we had traversed, as also far on both sides, that is, to north and south of our track. Indeed, as a noteworthy fact it should be recorded that it was 'off

the track' in regions lying remote from the direction towards which the wind was blowing that our aerial signals had been best heard, a fact which, however hard to account for, is in accord with former experience. In very few cases were more than three reports heard by listeners near at hand, which would show that the range of audibility scarcely exceeded five miles either up or down the wind in the balloon's path.

On the other hand, the most complete series of reports were recorded by observers stationed at long distances athwart the wind, and, a very remarkable fact, such observers were generally found to be groups, *i.e.* within a mile or two of each other, as though the far aerial sounds were borne down to earth on favoured patches of ground here and there. At Brentwood, where the range of the nearest report would be not less than ten miles, and of the furthest more than twenty miles, the complete series was heard by one observer. By another standing about a mile away six were heard out of eight, while at a rectory house in the same near locality the firing was actually heard within doors. At Sevenoaks, fourteen miles south of the balloon's track, a correspondent records in accurate detail the reports, which he asserts 'might have been heard from miles beyond,' a statement which is also supported by the evidence of a crop of other independent observers in the same immediate neighbourhood, who all heard the detonations with the same distinctness. Over a wide district outside this limited locality no sounds are recorded, but clustered round and about Edenbridge, three leagues further out, there were several successful listeners, while from Dormans, in Sussex, fully twenty miles away from the nearest firing point, has come, curiously enough, the most complete record of all.

Practically everywhere a similar condition of things prevailed, the hearers being found to occupy stations which were not isolated and scattered here and there, as might have been expected, but which were almost always grouped together in some comparatively near neighbourhood. It was as though the winds, which as we have seen blew in wayward currents about our course, had made sport of the sounds they bore and directed them at their will.

The result of the experiment has been in its way not unlike another which was made years back by an engineer friend of the writer, who was employed to determine the devious minor streams of water in the same reach of the Thames over which we ourselves had been voyaging. His method, which was as efficacious as it was

ingenious, was simply to purchase the whole stock-in-trade of an orange-woman and to scatter the fruit broadcast on the water. In this case the oranges, selecting certain distinct by-streams, drifted not hither and thither but towards different but definite havens. It was just so in our own experiments with the travel of our own sound signals.

The most remarkable communication of all that I received, and which I give for what it is worth, came from a secluded country parsonage in Norfolk. Here, guided by experience already recorded, advantage was taken of an empty pit facing the track from which the sounds would proceed, but which in this case could be scarcely less than eighty miles away. One observer stood within the pit, while two others ascended a hill whence a good view southward was obtained. All three of the observers recorded a far sound 'resembling thunder' coming also apparently from the right direction and closely corresponding in time with the moment when the last and nearest bomb was fired over Purfleet in Essex.

Two other interesting facts remain to be narrated. The entire number of correspondents everywhere, save in two limited districts, namely those of Croydon and Dartford, describe the sounds as resembling single reports without reverberation of any kind. Almost all of the observers, however, who were stationed in the above districts speak of the reports sounding as if they were distant thunder claps, or 'like thunder rolling in the hills.'

The remaining fact to which I will draw attention relates less perhaps to acoustics than to natural history, and is related by another observer who was stationed in the near neighbourhood of Brentwood. This gentleman, it appears, is the possessor of a thoroughbred racing mare, which, being out at grass in an open meadow, was not unnaturally startled by the first and clearly heard report. So also by those which followed, till these, owing to distance and adverse winds, faded completely out of hearing.

Even then, however, the finely strung sense of the animal continued to hear the reports, and thus recorded for its owner the moments when each occurred, though no longer audible to the human ear.

JOHN M. BACON.

# THE SORROWS OF MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH

BY VISCOUNT ST. CYRES

Of late years several efforts have been made to discover the original of Thackeray's Lady Fanny Flummery. For my own part, I would rather be enlightened as to the poems of Miss Briggs—Miss Janet Briggs, I mean, the *dame de compagnie* to old Miss Crawley. What has become of the 'Trills of a Nightingale,' which she published by subscription? Where does her writing-master lie buried—the hectic young man, whose lock of yellow hair she treasured in her old desk upstairs? A large proportion of the poems must certainly have been addressed to him. Since no direct answer is forthcoming, there is nothing for it but an appeal to the argument from analogy; perhaps one may infer the general nature of the 'Trills' from the 'Elegiac Sonnets' of Mrs. Charlotte Smith. Not but what allowance must be made for differences between the ladies. Mrs. Smith, as well as being a poetess, was a novelist of repute, and a woman of far stronger character than poor old fluttering Janet. She belonged more wholly to the eighteenth century, being some twenty years the older of the two; moreover, the dead writing-master was replaced in her case by a living and exceedingly ill-conducted husband. Still, the literary impulse was in both cases the same. Both ladies were unhappy, both were abundantly sentimental, both ended by having to work for their bread.

Charlotte Smith was born in 1749, being the eldest daughter of a Sussex landowner, Mr. Nicholas Turner, of Bignor Park. From the first, says her biographer, Mrs. Elwood, she gave proof of 'great natural abilities,' and of a more insatiable thirst for reading than was thought proper for a country gentleman's daughter to exhibit; for in those days society was still of Fénelon's opinion, that young ladies ought to shrink from learning as from vice. Besides, the young Charlotte did worse than read:

The partial Muse has from my earliest years  
Smiled on the rugged path I'm doomed to tread,

and by the age of ten she had a number of original poems to her credit. No wonder 'her young companions thought her romantic,

and too great a genius for study.' I fear that she was also rather hard to manage: some scathing lines about

The rustic nymph, whom rigid aunts restrain,  
Condemned to dress, and practise airs in vain

point to not inconsiderable disturbances in the Bignor household. It was probably for the sake of peace that Mr. Turner married her off, at the early age of fifteen, to a harum-scarum young gentleman scarcely older than herself. This was Benjamin Smith, younger son of a rich West Indian merchant.

This marriage was the sad beginning of her sorrows. Mrs. Elwood draws a lively picture of her desolation on first going up to London with her husband. In those days old-fashioned City people still lived over their place of business; and the young couple joined the parent Smiths in a 'dull and gloomy habitation, into which the beams of the sun never penetrated, consequently filling the mind with depression and gloom.' Nor were its inhabitants much more cheerful. Charlotte's mother-in-law, a faded Barbados beauty and an invalid, was a 'peculiarly unattractive personage,' and the old merchant himself was not much better. He was fond enough of his daughter-in-law in a heavy Philistine way, though he never troubled to hide his contempt for her literary tastes and literary acquaintances. Whenever 'his creaking shoes gave notice of a domiciliary visit,' under the sofa-cushion the novel had to go, and callers made haste to take their departure. What he liked her to do was to write business letters at his dictation in the mornings, and to sit with him in the evenings, while an old housekeeper with a strong Cumberland accent read him 'devotional works of a most gloomy tendency.' As for the husband, young Benjamin Smith, he combined the disadvantages of a man of pleasure and an amateur inventor. Interest in his wife and children he had none; the one aim and object of his domestic existence was to keep out of his father's way.

So far, Charlotte's life was no worse than dull and depressing; but in 1776 the old merchant died, and calamity began. In the first place, he left a long and exceedingly complicated will, drawn up entirely by himself, which met with the usual fate of such instruments. The Jarndyce case itself was not a greater god-send to the Chancery Bar. Action after action was brought by Charlotte against her husband's elder brother, till this Lady from

Sussex must have become as uncomfortably well-known to Lord Thurlow as the Man from Shropshire was to Lord Cranworth. In the second place, her husband, having bought a small place in Hampshire, must needs set up as an agricultural inventor; for these were the days of Arthur Young, when every duke and every apprentice thought he could farm by the light of nature. Benjamin Smith's experiments, however, were more ingenious than successful; according to his wife—by no means a sympathetic critic—his favourite hobby was the manufacture of manure out of old discarded wigs. Things soon ran their natural course—debt, the King's Bench prison, flight to France. Finally Charlotte could endure him no longer. A separation was effected in 1786, and she retired to nurse her children and her sorrows in her native Sussex—first in a cottage at Wyke, near Chichester, afterwards at Brighton.

It was now that want of money made her think of obtaining a market for her literary wares. So long as she had lain on

Prosperity's enfeebling bed,  
Or rosy pillows

her gentility had shrunk from the vulgar prominence of print. No one held more strongly than she that, for an English lady of the age of George III., as for an Athenian lady of the age of Pericles, the *post of honour was a private station*. Still, there is no arguing with the lack *paterni et Laris et fundi*, which one of her fellow-unfortunates translates:

To suits litigious, ignorant, and raw,  
Compelled by an illiterate brother-in-law,  
Oppression blasted all my golden views,  
And Penury inspired my darling Muse.

Of suits litigious Charlotte had more than her fill during her struggle with old Mr. Smith's executors. No wonder she is fond of asking:

Would Cowardice postpone Death's calm embrace  
To linger out long years in torturing pain,  
Or not prefer it to the ills that chase  
Him who, too much impoverished to obtain  
From BRITISH THEMIS *right*, implores her aid in vain?

Death, indeed, seems to have been the most sympathetic companion that the poor lawyer-ridden lady had, unless it was Despair. She is always invoking this

Spectre of terrific mien,  
 Lord of the hopeless heart and hollow eye,  
 In whose fierce train all ills are seen,  
 That drive sick Reason to insanity,  
 Approach ! In me a willing victim find  
 Who seeks thy iron sway, and calls thee kind.

Flesh and blood acquaintances were much more trying—in particular one Miss C., who was responsible for the highly unfortunate suggestion that Charlotte should try her hand at a comedy.

Would'st thou have ME, then, tempt the comic scene  
 Of gay Thalia ? used so long to tread  
 The gloomy paths of Sorrow's cypress shade,  
 And the lorn lay with sighs and tears to stain.  
 Alas, how much unfit her sprightly vein !

was the answer Miss C. got, followed by yet more poignant prose. “*Toujours perdrix*,” said my friend, “*toujours des chansons tristes* may not be so well received as if you attempted—what you would certainly execute as successfully—some more cheerful style of composition.” “Alas !” replied I, “are grapes gathered from thorns or figs from thistles ? Or can the *effect* cease while the *cause* remains ? You know that, when in the beech woods of Hampshire I first struck the chords of the melancholy lyre, its notes were not intended for the public ear. It was unaffected sorrow drew them forth. I wrote mournfully because I was unhappy. And I have unfortunately no reason yet to *change my tone*. The time is indeed arrived when I had been promised by the “honourable men” who *nine years ago* undertook to see that my family obtained the provision which their grandfather designed for them, that all should be settled, all should be well. But at this moment—far from feeling compunction for the ruin they have caused, the dreadful misfortunes they have been the authors of—one shrinks from the very attempt to make redress, and wraps himself in the callous insolence of his imagined consequence ; while the other uses such professional subterfuges as are the disgrace of his profession, to insult me with a continuation of tormenting chicaneries which his perseverance in iniquity has put it out of the power of Heaven itself to remedy.” Under such circumstances *toujours des chansons tristes* were a psychological necessity : ‘pale Experience’ could not do otherwise than

Hang her head  
 O'er the sad grave of murdered Happiness.



Necessarily, also, such abundant miseries reacted on the literary methods of our author (Mrs. Smith was far too good a mistress of the English language ever to call herself an 'authoress'). She was so keenly gripped by her emotions that she cared little whether they were original or no. Often it was enough to repeat, with bursting heart-throbs, what others had already said coldly and correctly. Thus Pope's tame conclusion to his 'Eloisa'—

The well-sung woes shall soothe my pensive ghost :  
He best can paint them, who can feel them most—

becomes, in the hands of her transforming passion,

Ah, then, how dear the Muse's favours cost,  
If those paint sorrow best who feel it most !

It is true that some of these adapted lines do not rhyme, or scan, or even construe ; but our Georgian Niobe troubled nothing at all about the external decencies of verse. Lank, dishevelled, wildly streaming couplets seemed to her the fitter symbol of true inward woe. Full of tearful disdain for Classic pedantry, she sent forth her volume of 'Elegiac Sonnets' into the world with an explanation in the Preface that 'the little poems here called Sonnets have, I believe, no just claim to the title ; but they consist of fourteen lines, and seem to me no improper vehicle for a single sentiment. I have read that the legitimate Sonnet is ill calculated for our language.' Could Romantic lawlessness go farther ?

All the same, Mrs. Smith was not so gloriously free as she imagined from bondage to the art of composition : quite an appreciable proportion of her tears was due to purely literary requirements. So much so that certain critics of the day—'carrying into their closets the same aversion to anything tragic that influences their present theatrical taste'—were cruel enough to accuse her 'of *feigning* sorrow, for an opportunity of showing the pathos with which it can be described.' This, as a general accusation, is absurd. *Ce qu'on dit de soi est toujours poésie*. A lyrical effusion is not an affidavit ; if poets were to put nothing into their verses beyond what they were conscientiously certain they had actually felt, their works could not possibly give enjoyment to anyone but the moths. For the inward 'experiences' of a poet are probably not so very different from those of other people—they are disconnected, dull and dreary as they stand ; a great deal must be added to them, and perhaps still more must

be subtracted, before they will let themselves be worked up into some glowing phrase or pungent epigram. No doubt this means some sacrifice of truthfulness, but that is unavoidable. Absolute, naked, unadorned Truth does not lend herself to artistic presentation. As Father Malebranche said, she has generally got some hairs on her chin. Whether he likes it or no, the writer is obliged to imitate that 'Distressed player, detained at Brighthelmstone for debt' for whom Mrs. Smith once wrote a poem.

His eleemosynary bread he gains,  
Mingling with real distresses mimic pains.

But while the world allows its authors a considerable latitude, it does not expect them to lose touch with realities altogether. They need not tell what actually happened, either in their own minds or elsewhere; but they must keep to what might, could, would, or should have happened—to things which the Father of Criticism would sanction, as seeming *either necessary or probable* to their hearers. It was here that our heroine sometimes stumbled and that the contemporary critics had a certain case against her. Finding realities uninteresting, she was too apt to treat them as of no account, and drift off to a cloudland of chronic hyperbole where emphasis was the only law. She became fanciful and extravagant; the feelings she professes to experience are not the feelings a real live human being would have under the circumstances she describes. Take, for example, her sixty-second sonnet, written 'while passing by moonlight through a village, while the ground was covered with snow.' The reader inevitably pictures her hurrying back to her cottage near Chichester, intent on a change of boots and a cup of tea; and it comes as a serious shock to his nerves when she informs him that really

I wander, cheerless and unblest,  
And find in change of place but change of pain.  
For me, pale Eye of Evening, thy soft light  
Leads to no happy home; my weary way  
Ends but in sad vicissitudes of care:  
I only fly from doubt—to meet despair.

The truth is that our heroine had fallen into a delusion common to the majority of writers who trade habitually upon a single emotion. Having chosen to come forward as a Laureate of the Lachrymose, she thought herself bound in honour to live consistently up to her part, and treat whatever subject happened to

engross her pen in terms of undiluted lachrymosity. She was not one, she proudly declared, to 'clothe affliction in a robe of flowers.' Nevertheless, she soon found out that her afflictions must be dressed up somehow, if they were to make any impression on the public; so she determined to attire them in a very Mourning Warehouse of funereal black. No other grief that ever sighed has worn so much crape and bombazine.

Not that the bombazine and bugles were at all displeasing to their wearer. La Rochefoucauld long ago pointed out that there is a certain satisfaction in being supremely, preternaturally unhappy. It proves that, after all, one must be a person of some consequence, otherwise the gods would scarcely give themselves so much trouble to pin one to earth with their hate. Besides, Mrs. Smith was a daughter of the eighteenth century; and that century, as Fénelon delicately puts it, was apt to mistake fastidiousness for evidence of lively sensibility. Especially well did it understand the more Epicurean aspects of depression. Sixteen degrees below the normal point of cheerfulness proved nobility of soul just as well as sixteen quarterings on the shield proved nobility of blood. And it was so easy to depress oneself. Marianne Dashwood went the right way to work when she played over every favourite air that she had been used to play to Willoughby, and re-read every book that she had read with him, till her heart was so heavy that no farther sadness could be gained. One may be pretty sure that these recipes were often enough put into practice at Chichester. Indeed, it is quite likely that the 'Elegiac Sonnets' formed part of the literature of Marianne: our heroine was certainly one of the writers whom 'Sense and Sensibility' was meant to satirise.

Still, nobody can pose for ever; and there are moments when Mrs. Smith put off her mourning and made a brave effort to smile through her tears. Perhaps the best instance of this is the little poem written to console a friend on whom her state of single blessedness sat heavily.

Tho' Time's inexorable sway  
Has torn the myrtle-bands away,  
For other wreaths 'tis not too late;  
The amaranth's purple glow survives,  
And still Minerva's olive lives  
On the calm brow of Thirty-eight.

No more shall Scandal's breath destroy  
The social converse we enjoy

With bard or critic *tête à tête* :  
 O'er Youth's bright beams her blight may pour,  
 But spare the improving friendly hour  
 That Science gives to Thirty-eight.

The joys of deliverance from bondage to a *chaperon* have never been more feelingly portrayed.

The society of persons like this vestal was one of the poor lady's chief consolations, and she pays friendship a noble tribute in her verse :

'Tis thine, O Nymph, with balmy hand to bind  
 The wounds inflicted in misfortune's storm,  
 And blunt severe affliction's sharpest dart.  
 To Thy pure spirit warms my Anna's mind,  
 Beams thro' the pensive softness of her form,  
 And holds its altar on her spotless heart.

But her best friend was her neighbour, William Hayley, of Eartham, the friend and biographer of Cowper. Hayley was himself a writer of verse, though I am afraid time has not verified Mrs. Smith's prediction :

High in Fame's bright fane has Judgment placed  
 The laurel wreath Serena's poet won.

Still, he was a man of taste, and influential in Paternoster Row. At his house Mrs. Smith had the happiness of meeting the author of 'The Task,' who was kind enough to listen to some extracts from her novels. These literary friends were also useful in getting her subscribers to her books, though indeed subscriptions flowed in without the asking. Both political parties united to do honour to the 'Elegiac Sonnets.' Whig magnates like Georgina Duchess of Devonshire and Charles James Fox figure on the list of patrons; while, on the other hand, a son of Lord North put himself down for no fewer than ten copies. One almost wonders that he did so, considering the political temper of the work. No one could be severer than Mrs. Smith on the evils of

A time  
 Like this we live in, when the abject chime  
 Of echoing parasite is best approved.

There is a noble sonnet, also, addressed to a young friend of her eldest son, on his expulsion from a public school.

The base control  
 Of petty despots in their pedant reign  
 Already hast thou felt; and high disdain  
 Of tyrants is imprinted on thy soul.

The same immature and nameless Ajax, having thus gloriously defied the birch, is bidden to go on as he began.

Not where mistaken glory in the field  
Rears her red banner, be thou ever found ;  
But against proud Oppression raise the shield  
Of patriot daring.

Indeed, I am afraid that Mrs. Smith was no sounder than her brother-poet, William Wordsworth, on the subject of the French Revolution. In spite of the fact that one of her daughters was married to an *émigré*, she could deal very severely with Mr. Pitt and all the

Statesmen, ne'er dreading a scar,  
Who from pictured saloon or the bright sculptured hearth,  
Let loose the demons of war.

But most significant of all is a poem bearing the innocent inscription : 'An Elegy addressed to a Lady who was afflicted at seeing the funeral of a nameless pauper, buried at the expence of the Parish in the Church Yard at Brighthelmstone.' It is a wonder Mrs. Smith was not prosecuted for sedition, after explaining how

In Earth's cold bosom, equalled with the great,  
Death vindicates the insulted Rights of Man,

within a short time of the execution of Louis XVI.

As it was, the 'Elegy' gave great offence ; even Mrs. Elwood is rather uneasy, though she refers the chief of the blame to certain undesirable acquaintances made at Brighton. But Charlotte herself took a very high line, and loudly asserted her right to preach irresponsible treason as long as she chose, without caring for 'the suffrage of those who suffer party prejudice to influence their taste.' Indeed, she was always very independent of the opinions of her critics. The only time she condescended to reply to them was when the second volume of her 'Sonnets' was delayed in the press ; whereupon ill-natured persons renewed against her a charge once levelled at Samuel Johnson.

He for subscribers baits his hook,  
And takes your cash—But where's the book ?  
No matter where ! Wise fear, you know,  
Forbids the robbing of a foe.  
But what—to serve our private ends —  
Forbids the robbing of our friends ?

Mrs. Smith's reply to the accusation was a miracle of feminine

logic. In the first place she observed that the most she could hope to make from the subscriptions was 'a sum which no contrivance, no success, could make equal to one year of the income I ought to possess.' In the second place she threw the blame of the delay on to the shoulders of the reviewers of her first volume, who had 'crushed the poor abilities of the author, and added the painful sensations of *indignation* to the inconveniences and deprivations of indigence.' Thirdly, and as if by an after-thought, she added that she had been too ill to correct the proofs. And sure enough, on her fortunate recovery, the second volume made its appearance in 1797.

This date is an important landmark in the history of our heroine's mind. Hitherto friendship and the thought of death had been her only consolations; henceforward she is going to appeal to the Goddess of Botany, promising herself that

Among the silent shades of soothing hue,  
The bells and florets of unnumbered dyes  
Of that sweet Nymph, my tired and tear-swoln eyes

at last might find relief. Linnæus now became her bedside book, and many traces of his learning appear in the 'Sonnets,' as well as in her prose 'Rural Walks and Rambles.' Birds also had an interest for her. She was great on the 'cries portentous' of the *Caprimulgus Americanus*, and on the habits of the common night-jar—though 'as I have never seen one dead,' says our scientist proudly, 'I know not to what species it belongs.' Perhaps she was a little too fond of using her Natural History to point a moral. The observation that

The Beccafica seeks Italian groves,  
No more a wheat-ear,

reads like a sly side-stroke at the dubious 'ortolans' of Leadenhall; and such a passage as

The mantling Clematis, whose feathery bowers  
Wave in festoons with Nightshade's purple flowers,  
The silver weed, whose corded fillets wove  
Round thy pale rind, even as deceitful love  
Of mercenary beauty would engage  
The dotard fondness of decrepit age,

would certainly have been more at home in 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World.' Its writer's energies were better employed in discovering how many Alpine plants grew in Sussex, or in drawing

delicate distinctions between *Lichen Caperatus*, 'begemmed with scarlet shields,' and Lungwort lichen,

With its cups of gold,  
Which to the wildest winds their webbs oppose,  
And mock the arrowy sleet or weltering snows.

In all these researches her first guide seems to have been the learned and ingenious Dr. Erasmus Darwin, whose 'imagination so happily applies all the objects of natural history to the purposes of poetry.' But the disciple soon outran her master; Charlotte could never have descended to such depths as

So bright, its folding canopy withdrawn,  
Glides the gilt landau o'er the velvet lawn,

which brought down on the 'Loves of the Plants' the ribaldry of the *Anti-Jacobin*. Darwin was still in bondage to the school of Pope, and its idea that landscapes were intended as a kind of decorative wall-paper for human habitations—or, to adopt the language of 'Télémaque,' that *horizons* could be really *formés à souhait pour le plaisir des yeux*. No doubt it was difficult to think otherwise when he wrote. The art of picturesque description had hardly been invented; there was not even a stock of words ready to the imaginative writer's hand. He had to choose between baldly scientific terms and conventional epithets quite as bald, drawn from his 'Gradus ad Parnassum.' All rocks alike were rugged; all rivers were equally majestic; all waterfalls were sparkling cascades, whether they sparkled in the Hebrides or in Hindostan. It is one of the few real merits of Charlotte Smith that she forswore these abstract unrealities and honestly tried to reproduce what her own eyes had shown her. Tame as her country scenery may seem to-day, fustian as is undoubtedly her language, there is, at least, some striving after physiognomy in landscape, some wish to fix its characteristic details on her canvas.

Unfortunately for her reputation, however, she was not satisfied with this, but must needs aspire to imitate 'the singular, the unhappy' author of 'La Nouvelle Héloïse.' There—to repeat a well-known epigram—Rousseau had taught man to interest himself in Nature, and Nature to interest herself in man; woods and streams became a kind of sympathetic looking-glass wherein the poet might see his own moods and intuitions reflected. Such mystical control of Nature seemed only too dangerously easy and attractive to a soul so charged with sensibility as that of Mrs. Smith. She



saw herself lifted up to be mistress over the elements; she struck the opening notes of the melody, and they filled in the harmonies in consonance with her emotions. And inasmuch as her heart knew no sentiments but one, Nature, under her guidance, became one vast conspiracy of sorrow:

Through all her wild woods and untrodden glades  
No sounds but those of Melancholy move.

The nightingale only waited for her appearance to utter its sad prelusive note, and die, a martyr to disastrous love. Some story of despair and pain in yon deep copse the murmuring doves relate. To pensive airs the green and pencilled blossoms wave; while the sallow trees seem o'er the ruins of the year to mourn.

But if our heroine often came near to unintentional burlesque of her master, there were times also when she rose above him. To Rousseau Nature meant an orchard, or a garden, or a sunny hillside, never too far from the haunts of men; she was still a dependent on human society, and especially on Jean Jacques himself. He had introduced her to public notice, and therefore, thought himself entitled to treat her as his *protégée*, and to expect her to be duly grateful for any advances he might make. Mrs. Smith, on the other hand, was one of the first writers of her age to appreciate—I do not say to appreciate effectively—the more inhuman manifestations of natural power. She liked to hear

The night-flood rake along the stony shore;

and took her walks abroad whenever

Swift fleet the billowy clouds across the sky;  
Earth seems to tremble at the storm aghast,  
And only beings as forlorn as I  
Court the chill horrors of the howling blast.  
For to my heart congenial is the gloom  
That hides me from a world I wish to shun.

I am afraid that what Nature gained in grandiosity she lost as a *consolatrix afflictorum*. It is hard to feel on equal terms with night-floods, or to court the horrors of the howling blast with any reasonable hope of success. From being the mistress of Nature, Mrs. Smith had gradually sunk to be her slave—and a slave who dared ask for no acknowledgment of her homage. It was enough if

In deep depression sunk, the enfeebled mind  
May to the deaf, cold elements complain,  
And tell the embosomed grief, however vain,  
To sullen surges and the viewless wind.

Tho' no response on thy dark breast I find,  
 I still enjoy thee, cheerless as thou art ;  
 For in thy quiet gloom the exhausted heart  
 Is calm, tho' wretched ; hopeless, yet resigned.

These lines foreshadow the third and final stage of our heroine's development, the period when Rousseau was left behind, and the 'Sorrows of Werther' adopted in his place. At first sight it may seem surprising that a book, popularly supposed to be full of love and suicide, should have had so much influence on a lady whose matrimonial experiences had killed the one—

I bid the traitor, Love, adieu,  
 A guest insidious and untrue—

and whose religious principles forbade the other. But Mrs. Smith knew perfectly well that Albert's pistol and Lotte's bread-and-butter were only episodes in the story, and it was not for episodes that she cared. She valued the book as being exactly what Goethe had meant it to be—a kind of mathematical demonstration, by the most scientific of poets, that inordinate sensibility, inordinately indulged in, more and more unfits its possessor for the battle of life, till he ends by finding the universe no fit place for him. And she applied the lesson to her own case. This world was for the pachydermatous, not for such as she, 'children of sentiment and knowledge born.' They alone were happy who had never known the voice of Reason—they only to be envied whom passion could not melt. Blest was yon shepherd who

On the turf reclined,  
 Lies idly gazing, while his vacant mind  
 Pours out some tale antique of rural love.

But thrice blest was a maniac who haunted the Brighton cliffs.

I view him more with envy than with fear ;  
 He has no *nice felicities* that shrink  
 From giant horrors ; wildly wandering here,  
 He seems (uncursed with reason) not to know  
 The depth or the duration of his woe.

Had she lived a hundred years earlier, Mrs. Smith would have been a Quietist, and learnt from Madame Guyon that the one sure road to peace lay in turning her own feelings against themselves ; she would have driven them from one nervous crisis to another, till a stage of numb, impassive lassitude was reached—the 'soft and savoury Sleep of Nothingness' that crowns exhausted

sensibility. But the eighteenth century had lost the knack of translating its emotions into theological terms; its religion, as Lord Melbourne said, was not suffered to invade the sphere of private life. Still less did it invade the sphere of literature; Mrs. Smith, though a sincerely pious woman, kept her piety out of her verse. Her final utterance is purely Stoic :

Lost in the tomb, where Hope no more appeases  
The festered wounds that prompt the eternal sigh,  
Grief, the most fatal of the heart's diseases,  
Soon teaches, whom it fastens on, to die.

Yet, as stern Duty bids, with faint endeavour,  
I drag on life, contending with my woe,  
Tho' conscious Misery still repeats that never  
My soul one pleasurable hour shall know.

It is pleasant to add that these gloomy forebodings were not fulfilled. Most of the clouds, both real and imaginary, had lightened before Mrs. Smith's death in 1806. She lived to hear her novels praised by Sir Walter Scott, and to see her children—among them the future Sir Lionel Smith, a distinguished general and governor of Jamaica—happily married and settled in life. The visitors of these last years generally found her 'with two or three lively grandchildren about her, conversing with great cheerfulness and pleasantry, though nearly confined to her sofa.' Indeed, Mrs. Elwood ventures to suggest a gentle doubt as to whether her heroine was ever quite so broken-hearted as the tone of her writings would imply. But Mrs. Smith was the servant of the public, and her many-headed master called for a melancholy tune. Twenty years earlier, or twenty years later, it might perhaps have been otherwise: for as there is a fashion in religion and in dress, so also there is a fashion in emotions.

## *THE COUNTESS AND THE FRYING-PAN.*

BY M. E. FRANCIS.

CLIVE STEPHENS sat all by himself on a wooden bench in the green gardens at Pöstyény, his countenance wearing a gloomy not to say ferocious expression, usually quite foreign to it. In the eyes of most people Clive was an exceptionally fortunate young man. He had more money than he knew what to do with, to begin with, his father, a rich manufacturer, having recently died; so that on his twenty-first birthday he—Clive—would enter into possession of almost fabulous wealth—wealth that could not be 'got through' even if Clive were minded to be extravagant, but that would continue to grow, for the firm of which he would henceforth be a sleeping partner was yearly increasing its business. He was also possessed of good health, good looks beyond the average, and quite an extraordinary amount of animal spirits. He had been to Bayreuth during the 'Long' to improve his German, having at the outset of his university career decided to go in for 'Groups.' But though he had been decoyed to this little Hungarian watering-place on false pretences, and was as wrathful as only an undergraduate of more than a year's standing could be with a recalcitrant fresher, it was not the remembrance of his interrupted studies which roused his ire.

He had thought himself very good-natured to notice Zelenics of Queen's at all; people were disposed to laugh at him at the University; it was said that the elder Prince Zelenics had originally written in grandiloquent style to the Dean of the 'House' to announce that his son intended to enter into residence there; whereupon the Dean had responded, very politely but without emotion, that if Prince Zelenics' son was capable of passing the entrance examination there would be no difficulty about the matter. Well—it ended in Zelenics going to Queen's. He was no good at all in a boat, and knew nothing about cricket, but he had a beautiful tenor voice, was good-humoured and rather amusing, and altogether was quite a decent chap when you sat on him well. Clive had always been interested in his talk about his

native land, and it was Zelenics who had beguiled him to Pöst-yény.

And now, on arriving at what in his present mood young Stephens stigmatised as an out-of-the-way hole, no Zelenics was there. The letter which Clive had found waiting for him instead rather increased than diminished his indignation. Zelenics was indisposed, it seemed; he was, indeed, confined to his bed with what he was pleased to describe as 'cramps' in his liver. He was desolated to fail his dear friend, but hoped to join him in the course of a few days; and meanwhile he was sure the latter would not find time hang heavy on his hands at charming Pöstyény.

'Charming Pöstyény indeed!' grumbled Clive; 'when I don't know a soul, when I can hardly understand a word of their infernal lingo, and when they expect you to make your biggest meal at one o'clock—I don't see where the charm comes in.'

It was the warmest hour of the day, and the gardens were almost deserted. The band would not play again until the evening; the fashionable throng usually strolling beneath the trees or sitting on the green benches had vanished; no one was to be seen except a few groups of peasants and a variety of Jews—typical Jews in rusty black gaberdines, and with kaftans and curly side-locks complete. Clive, surveying them with great disfavour, set them down as 'greasy brutes'; which vigorous expression of opinion seemed to relieve his feelings, for he rose, stretched himself, and smiled. What should he do to while away the time till one o'clock? He passed his hands over his crisp dark locks. Happy thought! he would have his hair cut.

After wandering about the streets for a quarter of an hour or so he discovered a barber's shop in the Arcade—a neat little shop, with walls and floor and ceiling all tiled with white china. A big burly man was in the act of polishing his countenance after a shave as the barber turned to Clive with an ingratiating smile:

'Will the gracious gentleman have his hair half-cut or whole-cut?'

Clive, being in an irascible mood, responded with quite unnecessary warmth. His German was villainous, but his expression and intonation made his meaning perfectly clear.

What did they take him for? he inquired. Half-cut? He was an Englishman, and in England only horses were half-clipped.

'No,' responded the abashed barber; 'it would be easy for the gracious gentleman to have his hair whole-cut.'

The big man, who had been polishing his face, looked round, his dark eyes twinkling over the folds of the towel.

'Monsieur perhaps speaks French?' he began in that language.

The innuendo was not very complimentary to the quality of Clive's German; but the latter was a sociable youth, and delighted in making new acquaintances; therefore, with a cheerful smile, he exchanged the Teutonic for the Gallic tongue and replied in the affirmative.

'Then,' said the gentleman, throwing out a warning finger, 'understand well what will be the result of having your hair whole-cut. Does Monsieur perhaps find the heat overpowering? See! If his hair is whole-cut his head will resemble mine.'

With that he jerked off the soft felt hat which he wore, and revealed a head shaved absolutely bare.

Clive uttered an exclamation of dismay, and then, recognising that he in his turn had been somewhat uncomplimentary to his new acquaintance, began in his peculiar Anglo-French a floundering speech intended to convey his opinion that though the style of hair-cutting in question might be, and no doubt was, quite suitable for Hungarians, an Englishman would not feel at ease if he adopted it. About half-way through a particularly fine sentence he caught a somewhat mocking twinkle in the big man's eyes, and forthwith his own white teeth flashed out in a broad smile.

'Um Gotteswillen,' said the stranger, turning to the barber; 'let the young gentleman's hair be half-cut!'

Then, putting on his hat for the express purpose, as it seemed, of removing it again with a flourish, he bowed to Stephens once more and went away.

Gloom descended on Clive as he presented his head to the barber.

'He might have stopped a minute or two longer, and I could have asked him a thing or two. Hang Zelenics and his cramps! One might as well be in a desert.'

Out again into the mellow sunshine, and over the bridge which spanned the turbulent waters of the Waag; then, still in morose and melancholy mood, to the restaurant where he had arranged to dine. One must do in Pöstyény as Pöstyény does, and dine at

one o'clock. As Clive approached the verandah where he had secured a table, his spirits rose in some measure, however; it certainly was a pretty spot, and the gardens were green and cool, and, moreover, as certain savoury odours reached his nostrils he discovered to his surprise that he was hungry. He looked up and down the long row of tables; there seemed to be a good many people here after all. There was a party of Jews in the corner—Jews of the better class, whose origin was only betrayed by their peculiar cast of feature. The women were pretty, with the pallid complexion that belongs to the type, and quick dark eyes.

As he looked about him he suddenly observed that a hitherto vacant table not far from his had been taken possession of by a lady, who sat leaning back in her chair as though waiting for somebody. One glance at her assured Clive that she was young and beautiful, with that kind of beauty which takes the beholder by surprise. She was tall and stately, with a rounded figure and long graceful limbs; she had eyes of the deep blue never to be seen in northern countries, a dazzling complexion, and hair the colour of ripe corn—a wealth of hair, piled up upon a very regal head. She might be a queen, Clive thought, as he looked at her. Hers was, as it were, a luxuriance, a superabundance of beauty, as though nature, enamoured of her own handiwork, had been extravagantly lavish in her regard; everything was there—shape, colouring, grace—and over all the radiance of youth. The hand which carelessly tapped the table was such a hand as Lely loved to paint; the round arm that gleamed through the transparent black gauze of her dress was, like the beautifully moulded throat, white as milk.

'A queen!' ejaculated Clive to himself; 'she is a goddess!'

He could not take his eyes from her face, but she, gazing abstractedly into the gardens, appeared quite unconscious of his presence.

All at once, however, she half rose from her chair and, leaning forward, made a little signal to a party just then approaching—a somewhat noisy party, among whom Clive instantly recognised his stout friend of the barber's shop.

'There she is!' cried this person in German; 'there is Irma! While we have been wandering about, looking for her, she has very wisely made haste to diminish the distance between herself and her dinner. Have I right to say that Irma is a sensible person and knows how to take care of herself?'



As he spoke he turned towards a lady in the centre of the group—a lady tall, stately, and fair-haired like Clive's goddess; with something of the same cast of feature, too, and with a quantity of fair hair; but the wonderful colour and brightness were lacking, and the expression, far from being serene, like that of the lady at the table, was distinctly peevish.

'She is there!' responded the newcomer in a sharp tone. 'It is pretty—not? for a young girl to come and sit by herself among all these people.'

'Ach!' said the lady at the table with a deprecating glance, 'I feared to lose thee again, Illinor. They kept me at the iron-monger's, and then I could not guess where you had gone. I thought it best to wait here, where I knew you must come.'

'But naturally,' put in a gruff, guttural voice, 'Countess Irma was very wise, and I am sure we are most grateful. What a beautiful table she has secured for us!'

For some unaccountable reason Clive was conscious of a feeling of resentment towards the last speaker. This person was little and dark, with an unmistakably Semitic cast of feature, and now came forward, rubbing his hands, and smiling in what seemed to Clive a repulsive manner.

'We have got the music, dear Countess,' he cried gleefully; 'we have got the music after all. Ah, when a fair lady expresses a wish one can always manage to gratify it. Is it not so?'

Drawing up a chair close to the Countess Irma, and bending over the menu, which lay beside her plate, the Jew began to call her attention to certain items with a hairy forefinger. She paid little attention to him, however, answering merely in monosyllables, and presently asserting, with a final air, that she cared nothing at all about eating; whereupon the little Israelite turned sulky and sat glaring round the table without speaking, till a gipsy band came sauntering in by twos and threes, each man carrying his instrument, except the tsymból player, who walked majestically after his. Then the Jew bent forward.

'You will not, I presume, pretend that you do not care about music, Countess Irma?' he said; 'will you do me the honour to choose your programme?'

'Ah,' said the Countess, with a little sigh, and a glance round the table that was half bored and half pathetic, 'whatever the others prefer.'

'Do not be so foolish, Irma,' said Illinor. 'You know very

well that Herr Kraus has arranged this entertainment to give you pleasure.'

'Nothing for nothing in this world,' put in the Baron with a sardonic smile. 'Our good Kraus has given himself much trouble on your behalf; you may at least repay his kindness by making a selection of music at his request. You are the last person, as we all know, to be forgetful of an obligation.'

'The last, indeed,' said Countess Irma; a wave of colour swept over her face, while her blue eyes flashed fire. Turning to the Jew, she said a few words in Hungarian, and he rose with an obsequious bow and hurried to the leader of the band.

A rare treat was that which presently fell to Clive's share—that of hearing a Hungarian Csardás played by a Hungarian gipsy band. All the characteristics of the national music are here exemplified: the arbitrary variations of time, the recurrent pause followed by a rush of hurried notes, the emphatic accent, the vibrating crescendo, culminating in a very torrent of sound.

Clive listened, at first bewildered, but subsequently entranced, the fascination of this gipsy music taking more and more hold of his imagination; his eyes meanwhile remaining fixed, with a persistency of which he was himself unaware, on Irma's beautiful face.

She, too, was carried away; he noted, with his foolish young heart leaping, how her colour came and went, how her eyes now kindled, now melted, how even her breath seemed to come quickly through her parted lips.

As the last quivering note died away she uttered a little sigh.

'All Hungary is in the Csardás,' she said.

'Let us have Schuhmacher Franz, Irma,' said the Baron, turning round carelessly. The tone, however, conveyed an order.

Irma hesitated a moment, and then, looking towards Herr Kraus, said unwillingly, 'If you will be so good.'

Rounding his back in a profound bow and spreading out his ugly hands, Herr Kraus gave an eager consent, and once more summoned the leader of the band.

A curious little half-burlesque performance was now given, violins and tymból contributing each their share of humour, varied by an occasional quaint interpolation of musical laughter from the players themselves, their voices marking the note with wonderful precision. To Clive's joy another Csardás succeeded it, and then one of Strauss' waltzes, played in the distinctive manner of the Czigány. So carried away was Clive that he actually for-

got his surroundings, and at its conclusion clapped his hands in approval.

The occupants of all the tables immediately looked round, some in amusement, some in surprise; the players themselves stared at him with astonishment, not unmixed with anger, while Herr Kraus scowled fiercely.

Clive's confusion was complete when the Baron, wheeling in his chair, saw and recognised him, bestowing on him a little condescending nod before he turned back to his party.

'It is my friend of the barber's shop,' he remarked in tones distinctly audible to Clive himself. 'Did I not tell you about it? Well, then——'

He dropped his voice and began to speak rapidly and with many gesticulations. Watching the play of eyebrow and shoulder Clive felt convinced that he was making fun of him—of his un-called-for wrath, of his peculiar French and German. They were all laughing—even she was smiling. Confusion!

'Kraus, you had better tell those fellows that the gentleman means no harm,' said the Baron when the merriment had died away. 'He is an Englishman. He means that he is pleased; in England people always clap their hands when they are pleased. I have seen it myself in the theatres.'

'But,' said the Jew, with a sullen glance at Stephens, 'why has he the impudence to be pleased? My band is not playing for him.'

'No, to be sure; 'tis a pity, Kraus, that you cannot force all the guests in whom you are not interested to stop their ears. Think of it! All those sweet sounds, which you have paid for or are going to pay for with your good money, being enjoyed by people who have paid nothing at all. Monstrous injustice—you ought to provide them with little pellets of cotton-wool.'

'Ach, Nándor, what nonsense thou talkest!' cried Illinor 'Thou makest my head ache. I am sure Herr Kraus would never think of wanting people to stop their ears with cotton-wool, and I am sure he never thinks about money in connection with giving pleasure to Irma.'

If the Baron's insolence had been almost coarse, Illinor's apology was so badly imagined that Clive, listening, forgot that he was himself the cause of the Jew's disturbance and positively blushed. The band began to play again, continuing at intervals throughout the repast; and Clive's vexation vanished as he listened.

The music came to an end at last. After complimenting the performers for their spirited rendering of the stirring Rakoczy the party broke up.

Clive watched with a sinking heart the graceful folds of the Countess Irma's black gauze dress trailing over the grass until they disappeared; then his eyes reverted disconsolately to the place which she had occupied. What was that lying beneath her chair? A parcel—a brown-paper parcel, which she had evidently forgotten. He crossed the intervening space in a moment and possessed himself of it; it was oblong in shape, tapering at one end to a point, and so carefully enveloped in paper that it was difficult to define its nature. As Clive grasped it, however, he found that his fingers met easily round the narrower part, while the other end appeared to him to be semi-globular in form. A sudden inspiration came to him: it was a musical instrument of some kind—a guitar perhaps. No; of course, a mandoline. He could very well imagine the Countess Irma playing the mandoline, her lovely face set off by the proximity of the bunch of ribbons, her white, tapering fingers drawing forth sweet, penetrating vibrations. A mandoline, of course.

These thoughts rushed through his brain as he hurried in the direction taken by the party; and almost before he had time, on reaching the alley, to decide whether he should turn to right or to left, he saw Countess Irma hastening back, an expression of concern on her face, her draperies fluttering as she flew along. So distracted was she that it was not until Clive had placed himself directly in her path that she saw him.

'Ah!' she cried in a tone of relief, as her eyes fell upon the parcel, 'ah! I thank you.'

'I saw,' stammered Clive, 'that you had left your'—he hesitated: was it a mandoline or guitar? He was loth to display ignorance—'your instrument,' he added with a sudden inspiration.

Countess Irma looked blank for a moment; then a gleam of mirth came into her eyes, while two distracting dimples peeped out in the neighbourhood of her lips.

'Surely,' she answered; 'my instrument, of course. I thank you very much, sir.'

She spoke the prettiest broken English, with, all the while, a quiver of laughter in her voice.

Clive reddened more and more. What had he said?—why was she so much amused?

As she held out her hand for the parcel, however, his courage returned to him.

'May I not carry it for you—at least till you rejoin your party? I will be careful not to damage the strings.'

She looked at him still with that gleam of kindly amusement in her eyes, and appeared to hesitate; but just at that moment the detestable Kraus came up at a sort of shambling trot, and she held out her hand hastily.

'I thank you; I will carry it myself.'

She took it from him, and with a slight bow turned away, leaving Clive crestfallen and furious. It was, however, some consolation to him to observe that though Kraus was evidently beseeching to be allowed to relieve her of her burden, his petition was refused.

Oh, what a morose Clive was that who betook himself back to the restaurant! If the place had seemed dull before, it was now a prison-house—a very dungeon. He smoked innumerable cigarettes, and prolonged the sipping of his coffee till the waiter began to wonder if the English gentleman intended to remain a fixture in the now deserted verandah. He anathematised Zelenics more than ever. If that idiotic fellow had not chosen this most inopportune moment to develop his absurd cramps Clive would at least have been able to glean some information about his beauty and her circumstances. Was she related to Illinor and the Baron? Above all, what had she to do with Kraus—the detestable Kraus—the unspeakable Kraus?

The dreary afternoon wore away somehow, and at six the band played; and Clive listened to it and dreamed impossible dreams.

Next morning came a letter from Zelenics giving harrowing details of his condition of health, but holding out hopes of his being able to rejoin his friend in a day or two.

A day or two! But how was to-day to be got through? A whole bright, hot, interminable summer's day. Could Clive hope for another glimpse of the divinity? Alas! though he wandered about the gardens and carefully inspected the crowd which had collected to listen to the morning band, and even sat out a nine-course dinner at the same table as that which he had procured yesterday, not so much as a flutter of her filmy draperies rewarded his anxious gaze.

With sudden desperation he resolved on a bicycle ride; it might possibly distract his thoughts, and would at least give him

wholesome exercise and kill time. The roads appeared to be tolerably decent, and he could think of nothing else to do.

He found no difficulty in hiring a bicycle, and set off, not in the best of tempers, it must be owned, but nevertheless conscious of a certain sense of curiosity, almost of expectation, which was not wholly unpleasant. After all he was penetrating into a new country—who knew what adventure might be awaiting him.

When he left the woods behind him and found himself in the midst of a great plain his brow cleared and he looked about him eagerly. How blue were the mountains—with that transparent blue peculiar to the Carpathians, which conveys the impression that the peaks themselves radiate light as well as the lambent sky above them. The plain itself was all astir with pastoral life. Here the last cross-shaped piles of sheaves were being carried away in long light waggons drawn by oxen; there, cleaving the golden stubble, was an immense brown tract of newly-turned-up soil, a whole convoy of ploughs following each other across it. There must have been at least twenty yoke of oxen swinging leisurely along, many of them driven by women, and not a few by children. Meadows green as the water-meads of Dorset lay side by side with stretches of Indian corn, the delicate fawn-coloured flowers of which made a network of gold in the sunshine, while the curved leaves became so many enamelled blades. There were no visible boundaries to these great fields, save where a double row of acacias or poplars indicated a path or a dyke. Woods there were in abundance, and villages, the cupola of the little white-washed church in the centre of each standing high amid the thatched roofs.

Now came a train of corn-laden waggons drawn by gigantic snow-white oxen; now, as Clive sped onwards, the plain was empty again, and he saw spreading before him only an immense many-coloured expanse, glowing under the burning sky.

All at once, while he gazed and wondered, his bicycle went bump, bump, and he nearly fell off—his front wheel had punctured. Then he suddenly awoke to the fact that the road, or rather the rough track into which it had degenerated, was the vilest he had ever traversed, and that he was practically alone in the midst of a boundless waste. He looked at his watch: it was five o'clock. He must have travelled at least twenty miles. Great Scott! Was it possible that he would have to return on foot, pushing his bicycle before him all that long, weary way? Perish the thought!

Since he had gone so far he might as well go a little farther; he must come in course of time to one of those villages which had appeared so plentiful when he first set out; there would be, no doubt, a decent inn where he could find a vehicle of some kind to convey him and his machine back to Pöstyény. Having come to this conclusion, Clive sat down amid the flower-sown grass of the wayside and smoked a cigarette; then, refreshed and invigorated, he rose again and began manfully to make his way along the dusty road. If the plain was flat, the road was undulating; in fact, as he groaned to himself, he might as well have pushed his bike along a ploughed field. Under the thick layer of dust, into which his feet sank ankle deep, lay the ruts formed by last year's rains—the most uncompromising ruts. Clive tried the grass border, with no better results; the grass grew in rough tufts that strenuously opposed the progress of his machine. Nevertheless he held on his way. The road must surely lead somewhere; they did many strange things in Hungary, but it was not possible they should crowd all their human habitations into one place and leave the rest of the country absolutely bare. He must come to a country-house, or a farm, or an inn, or even a cottage, where he could hire a waggon.

At last, to his joy, the road made an abrupt turn, and he saw through an avenue of pollard willows the first houses of a village. Quickening his pace, he soon found himself in the midst of it—a typical Hungarian village, with thatched, colour-washed houses, mud-walled farmyards, and the usual earthen mound before the door which is the peasant's storehouse. But there was no building that looked in the least like an inn. After a desperate glance round Clive knocked at the closed door of one of the largest, and, in his best German, inquired where he could procure a vehicle of some kind which would take him back to Pöstyény. A number of women and children were gathered round the stove, one of the former holding a stark naked baby in her arms.

They looked at each other, and laughed, and shook their heads; and the woman with the baby began a long speech in Slavonian, of which Clive understood not a word. He withdrew with a dolorous smile, and tried over the way, with no better result. Here the dark room into which the door opened was surrounded by beds. A figure moved in one of these and Stephens fled.

A little farther on a basket-maker was sitting outside his house busily weaving, and chanting a monotonous ditty. He



glanced up with quick dark eyes as Clive repeated his request, first in German and then in French; but he shook his head with an amused smile, and seemed quite at a loss to understand the stranger's meaning.

'Idiot!' exclaimed Clive, hastening onwards.

Ah! there was rather a large house, in the very centre of the village, opposite the church. Perhaps it was the priest's. Well, he at least would be an educated man, able to give a person a straightforward answer; and in all probability too he was the possessor of a carriage.

It was now almost dusk, but Clive could distinguish a tangle of greenery over the high wall which separated the house from the street, and observed that the house itself was a straggling structure, long and low, and curiously lifeless-looking; for the white outer shutters were all closed, and there seemed to be no lights anywhere, though in the village itself faint gleams appeared in many of the windows. Clive went up to the scrolled iron gate and tried it; it creaked slowly open on its hinges, and, passing through, he found himself in a large unkempt garden. The branches of beautiful trees hung across the moss-grown path, and at the farther end he caught sight of a grove of sunflowers; he could smell honeysuckle somewhere, and a great rose-tree, untrimmed and broken down, lay almost under his feet. As he looked about him, hesitating how to proceed, a small figure came straying towards him—an impish-looking child, whether boy or girl he could not tell. The creature wore frilled white trousers and a frock or tunic miles above its knees; its arms and legs and little skinny neck were bare, as was its closely cropped head. It stopped short a pace or two away from Clive, stared at him with uncannily bright eyes, and ejaculated 'Nun?' in an inquiring tone.

At least the sprite could speak German. Clive, designating the damaged tyre of his bicycle, explained that the machine was useless to him, and inquired where he could engage a carriage which would drive him back to Pöstyény.

'That I do *not* know,' responded the child tranquilly.

'Go and ask somebody, then,' returned Clive sharply, relieved to find that he had at least made himself understood.

The child, with a flourish of its lean little legs, began to run towards the house, screaming lustily the while, 'Tante! Tante!' Midway, however, it paused as though struck by a happy thought, returned, seized Clive by the hand, and began to drag him towards the house.

On reaching the building Stephens propped up his bicycle against the dilapidated wall and suffered himself to be dragged into a long paved passage, very dark and mouldy-smelling, though at the farther end a chink of bright ruddy light came from beneath the closed door. As they approached Clive distinguished a curious medley of sounds—clattering sounds, crackling and hissing sounds—no doubt this door led into the kitchen. His small guide speedily demonstrated that his surmise was correct. Impetuously throwing open the door, the imp dragged Clive into the midst of a large vaulted room with a paved floor and whitewashed walls, on which the firelight was dancing merrily. The wooden table in the centre was piled up with crockery; a basket of vegetables stood beneath; a barefooted maid in scanty canvas garments turned round to stare at the newcomer; while bending over the hearth, with her back towards him and a frying-pan in her right hand, was a tall, graceful young woman, looking strangely out of place in such surroundings. She wore, indeed, a very simple print dress, and was enveloped in a large apron, but the firelight shone on milky-white hands and arms and upon a crown of magnificent golden hair.

Clive's heart stopped beating for a moment, and then thumped with suffocating rapidity. He clutched the child's hand till it was withdrawn with a pettish scream, whereupon the figure by the fire turned and faced him.

It was the Countess Irma. The flush which her occupation had already brought to her smooth cheek deepened at sight of him; her eyes drooped for a moment, then she raised them with an inquiring and somewhat haughty gaze. Her head was thrown back, her disengaged hand dropped by her side, yet with the other she continued to toss the contents of the frying-pan with quick deft movements.

As the young man stood stammeringly explaining his presence the child rushed to his rescue, beginning in a shrill pipe to relate how the gentleman's bicycle was broken, and how he wanted a carriage, and how, as Tante knew, there were no carriages in the village except Papa's, and did Tante think Papa would lend the carriage to the gentleman, and——'

'So! That is enough, little chatterbox,' said Countess Irma. 'Thou shouldest not have brought the gentleman to the kitchen. What will he think of thy manners? Take him upstairs to the drawing-room and see if thou canst find Papa.'

She was turning towards the fire again when she saw an expression of bewilderment, almost consternation, on Clive's face.

His gaze now fixed itself on the frying-pan, now reverted, with an expression of shocked concern, to the lady's face. The blue eyes lit up, the dimples peeped out; with a sudden burst of laughter she held the frying-pan towards him.

'You recognise—my instrument?' she said.

Clive started, stared, exclaimed; finally, catching the infection of her merriment, burst into a fit of laughter.

The mandoline! The mandoline, which he had carried so carefully and gazed upon with such reverential awe. No wonder she had laughed. But he quickly became serious again, and a great wave of indignation broke over him. What had this delicate, high-bred creature to do with frying-pans? Why was she suffered to soil her exquisite hands with menial tasks, to scorch her lovely face over that fierce fire?

'You shouldn't do it,' he exclaimed with boyish impulsiveness.

She stopped laughing, looked at him for a moment as though about to speak, then, apparently changing her mind, turned to the child.

'Take the gentleman upstairs, Rúdi, and call Papa. I am quite sure,' she added, looking at Clive again and speaking with distant politeness, 'I am quite sure my brother-in-law, Baron de Zedina, will do all in his power to help you.'

In another moment the pan was hissing over the fire again, and the small boy—for Rúdi was presumably a boy's name—was piloting Clive along the passage and up a very dark staircase, on which the somewhat ragged carpets were so insecurely fixed that the young man tripped at almost every step.

As the child turned the handle of a door on the upper landing a petulant voice was heard from within:

'At last, Irma! I have been sitting in the dark for half-an-hour. What, hast thou not brought the lamp yet? Make haste and trim it.'

'Tante is making Rantás,' cried Rúdi. 'This is a gentleman who wants our carriage.'

A smothered exclamation came from the other end of the room as Clive went stumbling forward, hitching his foot in another torn carpet; and he saw a tall slender figure rise from its chair and stand outlined against the window.

'I go to look for Papa,' exclaimed Rúdi, and vanished.

Then Clive once more faltered out his oft-told tale, and the peevish voice, which he recognised as Illinor's, expressed conventional regret and sympathy.

'I am sure my husband will be glad to have you driven to the station,' she said; 'there is a little station not far from here. You can take train back to Pöstyény. But our horses—one cannot always use our horses—sometimes they are needed for the farm. Ah, Hungary is a miserable country, sir.'

'Surely it is a beautiful country,' returned Clive ecstatically.

'That may be, but it is not civilised. It is dull, dull. My husband used to have a house in Vienna. Vienna is very different—but here one does nothing, one sees no one.'

Clive thought the diatribe in questionable taste, and was glad when Rúdi returned with his father in tow. This personage turned out to be, as Clive expected, his acquaintance of the barber's shop.

He was sardonically polite as usual, declared there would be no difficulty in accommodating Clive with the carriage, providing that he did not mind proceeding at a foot's pace, for the horses had been under the waggon all day; the carriage also would probably jolt him more than he was accustomed to, being quite twenty years old. While it was getting ready, would not the gentleman partake of some refreshment? No? Well, then, he would give the necessary orders at once. He would not advise bicycling in Hungary. Hungarian roads were not to be depended upon.

'No, indeed,' returned his wife, and launched into another tirade as her husband left the room. Clive listened abstractedly, his thoughts still busy with the problem of the frying-pan.

Presently the door opened and Irma entered, carrying a lamp, which she set upon the table. She had removed her apron and turned down her sleeves; the severe simplicity of her dress seemed but to enhance her triumphant beauty.

'Ah, the lamp!' said Illinor with a confused laugh; 'why did you not make Rosi bring it?'

'As you know,' returned Irma coldly, 'it is not safe for Rosi to carry it; she would fall and break it.'

Clive knew as well as Illinor herself that Irma always brought the lamp; did he not remember her sister's impatient query of a little while ago. They made a slave of that exquisite creature—she was a regular maid-of-all-work.

Why did she submit to it? While he was revolving this enigma in his mind the sound of wheels was heard without, and Rúdi rushed in to announce the carriage was there.

Zelenics arrived at Pöstyény on the following day, a very limp and washed-out looking Zelenics, who was still much preoccupied about his health. He had a great deal to say concerning his

doctor, the course of treatment he had been through, and the food of which he might or might not partake.

'But, indeed, it signifies little,' he added mournfully; 'I have no appetite to-day. I never have after a journey. It is the—I have—*Ach—mir ist der Magen noch etwas aufgereg*t. I don't know how one says that in England.'

'One doesn't say it at all,' responded Clive curtly.

'Not? But how would one, then, translate——'

'You don't want to translate—we don't say these things.'

'Ach!' said the Prince, much surprised. Was it the paucity of the English language? he wondered, or was it the unenterprising spirit of his friend which was in fault?

'You see,' he went on, reflectively, 'it is not merely the liver which troubles me—it is also the spleen——'

'Good heavens, Zelenics!' cried Clive, jumping up, 'you might as well be cats' meat at once. For goodness' sake leave off thinking about your wretched interior and attend to me for a moment or two. Have you ever heard of a certain Baron de Zedina?'

The Prince, who had been at first disposed to take some offence at Clive's unsympathetic tone, laid aside his dignified demeanour on hearing this last name.

'Don't have anything to do with him,' he cried, throwing out a warning forefinger.

'You do know him, then?' returned Clive eagerly.

'Know him?—not exactly—not now at least. I used to know him before he went—how do you say?—smash. He is what you call a bad subject.'

Here Zelenics paused to spread out his hands, raise his eyebrows, and nod emphatically several times.

'Do you know his wife?' queried Clive abruptly.

'She was a Countess Slázský, was she not?' said Zelenics reflectively. 'A pretty woman—not? But her sister, the Countess Irma, is the most beautiful. It is a pity about her.'

'What!' cried Clive almost with a gasp.

Zelenics shrugged his shoulders. 'Poor girl! what is to become of her in such a family, and without a kreutzer of her own? Her parents are dead, you see; they, too, lost all their fortune, and so she lives with the Zedinas. And now Nándor de Zedina has—how do you say?—got through all his own money and all his wife's money—she had a fortune, she; her parents

were not ruined when she married. But now it is all gone and there is nothing for anybody. They say Countess Irma is to marry a Jew.'

'What!' cried Clive in a voice of thunder.

'Well, a converted Jew.'

'That doesn't make it much better. Is it a beast of a fellow called Kraus?'

'H'm, h'm,' said the Prince, pausing in the act of rolling up a cigarette and glancing at him sideways. 'You speak warmly, my friend. Have you, then, seen the beautiful Irma? And how is it possible that you should know about Kraus?'

'I have seen Kraus—and I have also seen the Countess Irma. I have seen her with a frying-pan in her hand, slaving like a kitchen-maid. Are things of this kind allowed in your country, Zelenics?'

'Ach!' said the Prince, blowing out the smoke deliberately; 'in every country, my dear, when people lose their money they are not very happy. As for the frying-pan, it does not seem to me so very dreadful. Our Hungarian ladies do not despise such things. They are proud of their address in household duties. My mother could make an omelet if there was necessity; but there is, happily, no necessity.'

'Does Princess Zelenics also clean lamps and carry them upstairs?'

'Lamps? No,' said the literal Prince; 'we have electric light in our schloss, and also in our palace at Vienna; but in any case my mother would not clean lamps,' he added reflectively. Then, after a meditative puff or two, 'the Zedinas are doubtless unable to keep servants who are—how do you say?—dressed—trained, I mean.'

'And so they make a menial of their beautiful sister,' cried Clive hotly. 'And pray, why is she to marry the Jew?'

'Ach! how can I tell? Kraus is, without doubt, devilishly rich; and it is possible that Zedina has obligations to him. And then, who is the poor girl to marry after all? People of our world would not care to connect themselves with the Zedinas. They are no longer at all in society. A fellow like Kraus, I suppose, thinks it very fine to marry a countess and a beauty, and it does not matter to him if she has no dot.'

Clive was by this time pacing in an agitated manner up and down the room.

'Do you mean to say,' he cried, halting all at once, 'that she, the Countess Irma, will willingly become a party to this odious bargain?'

'Willingly, I know not,' returned Zelenics cheerfully; 'it is spoken of as a thing that will be. As I tell you, our families do not now visit ——'

'Now, look here, old chap,' cried Clive, taking his friend by the shoulders; 'you've often talked a lot of rot about being devoted to me, and that kind of thing. Look here; will you do me a favour?'

'Do you ask? Anything that is in my possible, my dear.'

At another time Clive would have reproved his friend for addressing him in this fashion; he had been very severe on the foolish habit at Oxford, and Zelenics had got into the way of saying 'old chap,' or 'my dear fellow,' like anybody else; his English had evidently deteriorated since the beginning of the vac. Clive, however, was now too much excited to attend to such matters.

'Well, then, pay the Zedinas a visit this afternoon and take me with you. I have a reason for wishing to be formally introduced.'

'Ach! my dear fellow, you are in lof!' cried the Prince enthusiastically. 'But this is a romance. I agree—heartily I agree. And I also congratulate you. She is a lovely creature—a pearl. Go out and win, my friend, as you say.'

Clive reddened, laughed, began some incoherent rejoinder, and finally wrung the Prince by the hand. Zelenics was so carried away by emotion that he was constrained to fold him in his arms, which served to restore Clive's equilibrium more quickly, perhaps, than anything else could have done. He extricated himself as promptly as he could without wounding Zelenics too much, and observed in a matter-of-fact tone that they would start, he supposed, as early as possible in the afternoon.

'I will drive you myself, my dear,' said the Prince, excitedly. 'What luck that I brought my carriage!'

The young men made quite a sensation in Pöstyény as they set out that afternoon, though handsome equipages are not at all uncommon during the season. Prince Zelenics' smart new phaeton with its four thoroughbred horses; his two moustachioed servants, brave in silver-laced liveries and plumed hats, made, nevertheless, an exceptionally fine appearance as they dashed along; and Zelenics, moreover, managed his team with a skill and daring for which his friend had not given him credit.

The Baroness de Zedina was at home, but some delay occurred



before the visitors were admitted ; indeed the four bays had scraped up a considerable portion of the moss-grown path before the round-eyed little Slavonian maid threw open the door. Clive happened to raise his eyes as he mounted the stairs in the wake of his friend, and detected a vanishing form on the upper landing. It was the Countess Irma, and in her hand she held a dustpan.

Though Baroness de Zedina was in the act of fastening her waistband as they entered, having presumably effected a hasty change of costume, she received them with the graceful ease of manner peculiar to well-bred women of her race. It was true she had much to say in her low-pitched, discontented voice about the dulness of the neighbourhood, the bad condition of the roads, and the difficulty she found in accustoming herself to a life so unlike that she had been used to lead.

Though she had despatched a messenger in search of the Baron, no one mentioned Irma until the Prince, in response to an appealing glance from Clive, asked for her by name.

'Oh, Irma? She is perhaps out,' said Illinor, looking somewhat disturbed.

'She is, no doubt, in the kitchen,' thought Clive gloomily.

'Might one not see your charming sister?' persevered Zelenics. 'I should very much like to renew my acquaintance with her.'

The Baroness unwillingly summoned the little Slavonian girl, and desired her to request Countess Irma to come immediately ; and almost immediately, indeed, she appeared, looking lovely in a somewhat tumbled muslin gown, and wearing a big straw hat, partly, it might be, to conceal the fact that her fair locks were not arranged with their usual precision.

The Baron did not put in an appearance, for which Zelenics was grateful, and after an interval of somewhat constrained conversation he rose to take his leave. Clive noted that on saying good-bye he stooped to kiss the hand of his hostess, and with inward approval of the national custom he in his turn endeavoured to raise Irma's white fingers to his lips.

But she withdrew them with a smile that was half mischievous, half confused.

'I am girl,' she said ; 'in Hungary you must only kiss the married ladies' hands. My sister's, if you like.'

'No, thank you,' said Clive bluntly, but in a tone too low for the others to hear ; 'in England we only kiss the hands of people we have a special devotion to.'

'Ah!' she said, blushing; then, with just a hint of archness, 'But you do not know me at all.'

'Yes I do,' he responded quickly; 'I have seen—I know much.'

'Are you coming, my dear?' inquired Prince Zelenics at this juncture; and Clive, mentally anathematising him, bestowed a very stiff English handshake on Baroness de Zedina and followed him downstairs.

During the next fortnight he visited the Baroness and her sister several times; occasionally with Zelenics, but more frequently alone. He encountered the Baron sometimes, and once or twice Kraus happened to be there, who, on being introduced to the young Englishman, treated him with a familiarity which he found most offensive.

'You must excuse him,' said Irma once, on observing the undergraduate flush with anger after Kraus had been playfully thumping him on the back. 'He does not know—he has not the manners of society.'

'How can *you* stand him?' queried he, impetuously.

'I?' she returned with equal impulsiveness; 'but I hate him.'

'Yet you—but they say—oh, surely it can't be true—you will never marry Kraus?'

'If I can help it—no. But sometimes they press and press, and I—oh, sometimes I wonder if even that would be worse than my life here.'

'But there are other ways of escape,' Clive began tremulously. His head was swimming, he could hardly breathe.

'Nun, Herr Lor' My—or,' cried Kraus's voice immediately behind him. 'Why do you look so serious?'

Clive with difficulty resisted a murderous impulse, and remembering that this was not the time to utter the words which had been trembling on his lips, took his leave abruptly, murmuring, as he bent over Irma's hand:

'You will let me see you to-morrow alone?'

Late on the following afternoon he rushed without ceremony into Zelenics' room.

'Well?' queried the Prince eagerly.

'Well, they wouldn't let me meet her—they said she wasn't there; but I thought I'd see the thing out, so I interviewed her wretched sister and brother-in-law, and formally asked their permission to pay my addresses.'

'Quite right,' said his friend approvingly.

'It isn't in the least right; it is as wrong as it can be. They wanted to know about my sixteen quarterings.'

The Prince surveyed his friend sympathetically, with his head on one side and the tips of his fingers lightly pressed together; he felt it to be a delicate subject.

'You see,' pursued Clive gloomily, 'in point of fact I haven't got sixteen quarterings, unless you could count them all on one side—I believe my mother comes of a rather decent family; but I suppose that wouldn't do.'

Zelenics mournfully shook his head.

'I think it's all rubbish, you know,' pursued Clive hotly. 'I'm an Eton and Oxford man, and I think I'm all right.'

In this Zelenics enthusiastically agreed.

'My father was all right too,' went on Clive, still gloomily. 'Eton and the House, you know. I don't know much about my grandfather—he started the concern; I rather fancy he worked himself up.'

The Prince was a little shocked, but did not show it.

'Of course,' he hinted diffidently, 'you did not mention the—the concern?'

'Of course I did, though. I wasn't going to marry her on false pretences. When they inquired into the source of my income, I said it was a jam manufactory. I asked them had they never heard of Stephens's marmalade?'

'Well?' dubiously from Zelenics.

'Well, they hadn't; they wanted to know if Irma would be expected to live over the shop.'

'The shop! Ha, ha, ha!'

Zelenics entered into the joke with keen zest, having during his residence in England learnt enough about the position of a manufacturer on such a gigantic scale as was Stephens to appreciate the blunder of the Zedinas.

'Arms. I suppose I could have arms if I chose,' went on Clive irritably. 'A jar proper on a field gules, for instance: Motto—Jam Satis. How does that strike you?'

This subtlety was lost upon the Prince, who was cogitating deeply.

'It would do at least to quarter with the frying-pan,' went on Clive, clenching his hands. 'Oh, Zelenics, isn't it maddening? They would rather make a slave of her all her days, or sell her to that brute Kraus, than give her to me because of those trumpery

old quarterings. Where are Kraus's quarterings, I should like to know?——'

'Do they know you are rich?' interrupted his friend. 'Did you tell them you were far richer than Kraus?'

'No, I didn't,' responded Clive. 'I couldn't do it—I couldn't haggle about her. I told them she should never want for anything, and that her position as my wife would be a very good one, but I——' he broke off.

Zelenics looked at him with increased respect, but without entirely approving of this excessive delicacy.

'Do you not see, my dear,' he inquired, 'it makes things balance. On the one side rank and beauty; on the other a charming young man and colossal wealth. I think you should have——'

'Well, I won't—that's all about it,' responded Clive with heat. 'I haven't done with her yet, though,' he went on excitedly; 'I will have her answer from her own lips.'

And thereupon he left the room as hastily as he had entered it.

Early on the following morning Prince Zelenics stole out of the house, got into his phaeton, which had been drawn up at a little distance, and set off at full speed for the residence of Baron de Zedina. He was pale with excitement, and every now and then turned his head over his shoulder, as though in fear of pursuit. He had, in fact, without consulting Clive, undertaken to conduct a very delicate transaction: should he succeed all would of course be well; but should he fail he stood in just dread of his friend's wrath.

He would not, perhaps, have secured an interview with the Zedinas at so early an hour had he not chanced to catch sight of the worthy couple breakfasting in an arbour at the farther end of the garden, unattended, except by the small boy Rúdi, who was rolling on the scorched grass at some little distance.

Throwing his reins to one of his servants the Prince rapidly descended, and made his way towards them. It was a relief to him to find that Irma was absent.

The Baron and Baroness were attired in morning *négligés* of a somewhat unprepossessing order, and received him with every sign of embarrassment, not to say consternation.

Zelenics positively swelled with importance; he was enjoying himself enormously.

'I come,' he said, bowing over the Baron's hand, after having

respectfully kissed that of his hostess—'I come, my dear Baron, to plead my friend's cause. Why do you insist on breaking his heart?'

'Hearts at that age,' said the Baron, 'are very easily mended, Prince. Do not distress yourself.'

'But why?' insisted Zelenics—'why throw away so excellent an opportunity of establishing your charming sister in life?'

'Alas!' said the Baron, with his sardonic smile, 'Mr. Stephens is doubtless a very attractive young man—I doubt it not, since he is your friend; but when there is a question of marriage—'

'*Noblesse oblige enfin!*' interrupted the Baroness impatiently.

'Friendship is one thing,' resumed her lord with a wave of the hand and a bow towards his visitor. 'Prince Zelenics may consort with whom he likes; in such a democratic country as England, above all, it binds him to nothing. But when Countess Irma Slázánky receives a proposal of marriage from a seller of jam—you are not aware, perhaps, Prince, that your friend Mr. Stephens derives his income from the sale of jam?'

'I am perfectly well aware of it,' responded the Prince. 'He, or rather the firm in which he is a partner, sells jam in such quantities that I presume the number of pots they dispose of yearly would suffice to pave the streets of Vienna. Baron, I am forced to respect the extreme loftiness of your sentiments, but many in these days would consider you almost culpably disinterested to dismiss thus boldly—in a moment—by a word—the proposal of a millionaire.'

'A millionaire!' gasped Baroness de Zedina aghast.

'Are you quite sure?' stammered her husband.

'I am absolutely certain. All Oxford knows it. Let me tell you, Baron, my friend Clive Stephens can hold any position he chooses in England; it is his intention to become a member of Parliament; he will in all probability get a title. His wife, whoever she may be, will move in the very best society—will possibly receive Royalty itself.'

Husband and wife stared at each other blankly. Zelenics softly chuckled and rubbed his hands.

'It really seems a pity,' he went on. 'I myself am devotedly attached to my friend Clive. He has the most charming nature, I assure you—frank, open, generous almost to a fault.'

The Baron looked more and more pensive. A young millionaire brother-in-law who was generous to a fault—it did, indeed,

seem as though he had been a little hasty. His wife, imbued with the same idea, called out with a ring of undisguised anguish in her voice :

‘Ach, Nándor! it would have been better than Kraus.’

‘In effect,’ said the Prince with great suavity, ‘as regards fortune, I should think Mr. Stephens is ten times—twenty times—the richer man. But perhaps Countess Irma finds the personality of the estimable Herr Kraus more attractive.’

‘As for that,’ cried the Baroness peevishly, ‘she cannot endure him; and for me—judge, Prince, if I could tolerate the idea of such an alliance for a Slázsánsky. It was my husband who—’

‘Prince, I am willing to own that I have made a mistake,’ interrupted the Baron with a fine air of candour and magnanimity. ‘In my anxiety for my sister-in-law’s welfare I was unduly hasty in dismissing this very worthy and charming young aspirant to her hand. Since you are so amiable as to interest yourself in this matter you will perhaps——?’

‘With the greatest pleasure,’ said Zelenics.

A few moments later he was driving through the village, with a beaming face, when he suddenly encountered a couple walking very amicably side by side in the direction of the house he had just left. He pulled up when he reached them, waving his whip ecstatically.

‘This is well met,’ he cried. ‘Clive, my dear, you will no longer find obstacles. I have made explications—all is well at this moment.’

‘All is well, indeed,’ returned Clive triumphantly. ‘Irma loves me; Irma is willing to stoop to me—Irma,’ he added with a tender little laugh, ‘Irma says she does not mind the shop.’

‘I could—I could even sell if it would be of use,’ said Countess Irma, looking up with her great guileless eyes. Thereupon Clive laughed again, and drew her arm through his with a proprietary air. The Prince waved his whip once more and laughed too.

‘Well, dear friends, receive my congratulations; no one can part you now; I have assured that. The Baron and Baroness de Zedina give their heartfelt consent to your union.’

‘I am glad to hear they give their consent,’ answered Clive, ‘and much obliged to you, old chap, for procuring it for us; but, all the same, it is just possible we might have done without it.’

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